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The Apostles' Creed

HAROLD PAUL SLOAN

Introduction
BISHOP HORACE M. DU BOSE

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DEDICATION

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED TO THE YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE HADDONFIELD METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH, WHOSE EARLY FAITH HAS ILLUSTRATED ANEW THE PERENNIAL POWER OF THE GOSPEL OF JESUS

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INTRODUCTION

Next to the New Testament itself, the Apostles' Creed is the noblest and most steadfast writing of the Christian centuries. Its antiquity cannot be questioned; indeed, there is good reason for holding that, in simpler form, it actually goes back to apostolic times. Certainly, its norm is found in the Cæsarea Philippi confession of Simon Peter: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God." For nearly eighteen centuries the church has been voicing its faith through this formula, practically as we have it to-day. For the most part, the millions who have been baptized into the communion of saints have confessed it, or had it confessed for them. To the body of early believers it became a stay in persecution and a bond of unity in deliverance. For the martyr it was transmuted into courage, and to the testifying disciple it became the residuum of the life of God.

In the centuries of quietness and growth the Apostles' Creed has been a pledge of spiritual unity to the separated churches of Christendom. It has been the large common asset, where unity of authority and judgment has not been possible. The hope of future reconciliation moves toward the centrality of this historic statement. More than the Nicene Creed, which is all but divine in verity and authority, the Apostles' Creed is the heirloom of the church, relating all Christians to the time of the beginning, when there was in reality but one faith, as there was one body.

But the value of the Creed is not wholly historic; nor is it to be appraised only as a symbol of unity. It is a providential and prophetic means of preserving and inculcating the doctrines of truth and redemption, as set forth in the New Testament. In all the past of Christianity this creed has been graspable in a single process of faith and understanding. To the individual convert it presents in one view "the principles of the doctrine of Christ"; while in the soul of the mature believer it has fruited, like the wheat grain of the parable, into "the full corn in the ear."

At the present day the Apostles' Creed is proving to be a strong defense of orthodox Christianity; a barrier against alien and errant interpretations of "the common salvation, . . . the faith once delivered to the saints." The brevity of its phrases and the compactness of its statements, resting, as they do, in the categories of divine manifestation and human response, make it an instrumentality of unparalleled effectiveness. It thus becomes a corrective of theology and a preventive of heresy. Destructive criticism has encountered the Creed deeply settled in general Christian belief, where it has made itself the unfailing ally of "the glorious gospel of the blessed God."

It was a need of teaching that brought the Creed into existence and gave to it its incomparable form. The fellowship of the teacher and the catechumen breathes through it and becomes the point of an instant appeal.

The author of this volume has taken the teacher's view of the Creed, and has effectively illustrated it in his application throughout. About the successive tenets he has built a continuous discourse of exposition and instruction. With a whole generation of Christian youth grounded in the terms and substance of this statement, a future of orthodoxy and sound experience will be guaranteed to the church. Moreover, by this token, short shrift will be given to that Christ-dishonoring and faith-destroying subjectivism which, thief like, has "climbed up some other way" into many pulpits of the evangelical churches of America. Hearty thanks are due to the author for giving to his treatment of the Creed this timely direction. He has builded wisely against the tendencies that are active among us.

Especially is this volume happy in its definition of sin and its assessment of divine grace in forgiveness. Contumacy to the Creed, which is so largely a presentation of the personality of the Christ, results in a blunted moral sensibility, which runs at once to a denial of "the exceeding sinfulness of sin." Already, the subjectivism that has rejected the Virgin Born has announced that "the forgiveness of sins," as a tenet of faith, is not apposite to the scientific consciousness of this generation. This heresy must answer to the Creed, whose authority is the Written Word.

The dominant religious faith of a nation will determine its moral and social standards. What the church believes will determine its power to evangelize the world, including the training of the children of its own households. The church thus becomes the monitor of the nations. If, therefore, the church in America betrays the truth of the Scriptures, as voiced in the Creed, both the church and the nation are doomed to sink in the scale of moral and spiritual righteousness.

Belief in the eternal truth of God is more impelling in the consciousness of a nation than its constitution and statutes, while to the church it is the absolute condition of life. If those pseudo-scientific theologians who are trying to rewrite the Apostles' Creed should be widely abetted, then another age of darkness must come upon the world's faith. The exposition of the Creed at this time takes on the character of a prophetic "burden."

HORACE M. DU BOSE.

CHAPTER I

"I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY"

THE APOSTLES' CREED

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth: 12

And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried; the third day he rose again from the dead; he ascended into heaven, and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead. 78

I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen. 105

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

—*Titus 1. 9.*

CHAPTER I

"I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY"

PROFESSOR PHILIP SCHAFF, late of Union Theological Seminary, New York City, calls the Apostles' Creed "The Creed of creeds." This great religious expression has girdled the earth with an affirmation of unseen sublimities—the light by which men live, for we live by faith far more than we live by facts.

Some years ago the great English author Rudyard Kipling pictured the English buglers greeting the rising sun at each successive hour of its onward rolling, and thus girdling the earth with the martial strains of the British Empire. It is a majestic figure, and in a far truer and fuller sense it may be used to express the glory of faith as, in the stately words of the Apostles' Creed, it is confessed week after week around the circle of the earth.

Saturday night, when we in America are

sleeping, men far to the east of us, going to their places of prayer and worship, express their confidence in the infinite God in those familiar stately words, "I believe in God the Father Almighty." Then later it becomes our turn, and later still, when we again are sleeping, and the sun has moved far westward beyond the hills, other men will yet be taking up the great refrain and confessing their faith. And so we are in literal fact girdling the earth with the confession of our faith in Jesus Christ our Lord. Indeed, the total fact is even more sublime, for we are not simply girdling the earth with this noble confession during one single day, but backward and onward it sweeps encompassing centuries and millenniums. It came to us from days long past. It moves on from us out into the unbounded to-morrow. Two hundred years ago, when John Wesley was a student at Oxford, men stood in their churches and confessed their faith in these same great words—"I believe in God the Father Almighty." Four hundred years ago, when everything we call modern civilization was yet unknown, when Martin Luther was a rising leader in Germany, and heroic men were laying the foundations of the Reformation, they used to stand in their churches and repeat as now—"I believe in God the Father Almighty." Yes, a millennium and a half ago, when the Christian Church was just coming out of the furnace of her persecution; when her preachers were scarred and blinded by their sufferings, and the civilization of the Roman Empire was yet supreme, even then these same words were used to utter the hope and confidence of men—"I believe in God the Father Almighty." And not only so, but when another millennium and a half of time has become history, and all the wonders of our civilization have become commonplaces, these sentences will tower sublime above every possible achievement of those later years, and weary-hearted men will still express life's best wisdom, comfort and hope as now—"I believe in God the Father Almighty."

EARLIEST FORM OF THE CREED

The date of the earliest form of the Apostles' Creed is uncertain. It can be traced back in substantially its present form to the end of the fifth century, the time of Saint Augustine. Beyond this there was an older Roman formulary, differing from the Apostles' Creed but by a few slight omissions.

This older Roman formulary can be definitely traced to the middle of the third century, the time of the great Latin Father, Tertullian. Earlier still, in the time of Justin Martyr and Irenæus, the middle and latter part of the second century, there was already a familiar formula of faith. Both these Fathers assert that it had been handed down from the time of the apostles. The creeds they themselves wrote, which were doubtless dependent upon it, closely resemble the Apostles' Creed.

Professor Seeborg, of Berlin University, from this and other facts concludes that the Apostles' Creed cannot be dated later than the closing years of the first century or the opening years of the second; and Professor Kettenbusch, one of the foremost students of the Creeds, places it not later than the opening of the second century; so that within the span of one lifetime, and not further away from Jesus than we now are from the beginnings of the Civil War, originated this precious Christian confession, which summarizes the light of Christ, the hope and comfort of men.

GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker! What a pile of words it is!—God the Father! Almighty! Maker! There are three affirmations.

1. A universe created by intelligent will.

2. The infinitude of that will.

3. That infinite will aflame with the eager love of Fatherhood. The full confession of the Creed is incomparably richer, more sublime; but even here in this first sentence there is sublimity enough to make our minds dizzy and our hearts glad.

A Created World

Twenty-five years ago the idea of purpose behind creation was widely denied. There was a great deal of materialism. It was thought that evolution had made the idea of intelligent purpose unnecessary. There is still some such speculation; but modern thought, take it as a whole, had come to recognize the clear evidence of purpose. Some may even yet hesitate to confess a transcendent divine mind and will, but they admit at least an unconscious purpose, a certain inbuilt plan.

Anyone who has reached mid-life can remember the time when men seriously proposed that fortuitous evolution had produced all the marvelous adaptations in the universe—the adaptation of the eye to light, of the ear to hearing, and all the rest of those mysterious and wonderful interrelations between the various parts of the whole; but there are few who propose such an explanation to-day. As one writer has put it, "Evolution may indeed explain the survival of the fittest, but it is totally incapable of explaining the arrival of the fittest." The abundant and marvelous adaptations of nature prove purpose. Whether it be an unconscious purpose, a vague instinct within the universal substance itself, or transcendent Almighty God, may still be a question for discussion; but that intelligent purpose is behind the universe and in some way causal to it will be admitted on every hand.

THE IMMENSITY OF THE CREATIVE WILL

The telescope reveals beyond us a world of complex and exact relationship. When Kepler was making his investigations, calculating the laws and orbits of the stars, he wrote, "O God, I think thy thoughts after thee." The fact of law, relationship, plan, proclaimed to him the lawgiver.

Some decades ago the microscope revealed to us another world, a world of infinite smallness beneath our feet, within, and all about us.

And here too we found the same relationships, the same inbuilt law, the same evidence of purpose.

To-day we are just beginning to explore a world yet more minute—the world of electrochemistry. It is too small even for the microscope to reveal its processes; and yet far down there we find the same order and the same inbuilt law, the same manifestation of purpose.

My brothers, proud intellect can deny, but there is no reason to deny. Behind all this immensity of things abides one changeless, everlasting mind and will. "In the beginning God," says the Book; and there is no better wisdom—I believe in God the Creator, who made heaven and earth.

God the Creator! Man fashions houses, temples, cities. God creates suns, stars, worlds. There is a difference between fashioning and creating. There is a difference between cities and worlds. Oh, the immensity of God!

They tell us that it is ninety-eight millions of miles out yonder to our sun. And then they tell us this is one of the shortest distances in all the stellar spaces. The nearest fixed star is more than twenty trillion miles away. How can we grasp these measurements? The foot rule of astronomy is the distance light travels in a year. The speed of light is one hundred and eighty-five thousand miles in a second—seven circumferences of the earth in an instant of time! Multiply this by sixty seconds to the minute, times sixty minutes to the hour, times twenty-four hours to the day, times three hundred and sixty-five days to the year. In the course of one year light will travel upward of six trillion miles. Out yonder in our sky are stars the light from which has traveled scores of years and even centuries to reach us; and even these remote suns do not bound the measureless universe of God. I believe in God, the Creator, Almighty.

Though these immensities dwarf our souls, yet we are conscious that our souls are bigger than they all. When I stand myself alongside of the universe, I am standing by the side of my house; and I myself am as much larger than my house as the child of the father is always greater than the home of the father. The universe is God's house—the building he has provided for his family to live in. We are his children, and we are greater than the universe. Creator of the soul of man—this is the utmost measure of the majesty of God. Here it is that thought plumbs a bottomless abyss. We stand uncovered and hear a voice in the immensities saying, "Be still, and know that I am God."

FATHERHOOD OF THE OMNIPOTENT

This fact that God has created moral personality is more than the utmost measure of his power. It is a revelation also of his character. This is the third and noblest truth in the first great confession of the Creed. The Omnipotence that is behind the universe is the soul of Fatherhood—"I believe in God the Father, Almighty Creator." Here indeed is sublimity upon sublimity. There is an infinite of creative will, and this infinite of power is also an infinite of Fatherhood.

We have seen something of human hatred. We have seen its awful havoc in war. We have seen this havoc increased by the increase of power through man's enlarging knowledge. What an awful thing Omnipotence would be if hate were its motive! Even an Omnipotence moved by exact justice would be forbidding, notwithstanding the majesty of right. Perhaps, though, we could worship an almighty justice. We shrink from suffering, and yet there is a certain moral satisfaction when crime is punished. We have felt this confused emotion again and again: an emotion of sorrow and yet of moral peace. We have been brokenhearted, pitying the criminal; and yet we have been satisfied in the judgment that has overwhelmed him. Yes, man is morally great enough to worship an almighty justice, an inescapable Nemesis; but how incomparably richer is the faith that is affirmed in the Apostles' Creed—"I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth."

Fatherhood! What is fatherhood? It is love. It is more than love. It is creative responsible love. It is a love that has a mighty vision and hope. It is a love that has a mighty passion and eagerness. It is a love that will not let a son be less than a son. It is a love that will even sacrifice a son rather than its ideal of a son. It is Love that will gladly sacrifice himself that a son may become a son. Yes, I believe in God the Father, Almighty Creator!

"Tell me about God," said Nicodemus to Jesus. And Jesus replied, "God loved the world in just this sort of a way; that he gave his only begotten Son" in utter self-sacrifice, "that whosoever believeth into union with him should not perish but have everlasting life."

"Show us the Father," said the disciples to Jesus. Jesus answered, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." Do you know what he did just before he spoke those words? He washed the disciples' feet. And do you know what he did just after he spoke them? He died in patient gentleness upon the cross. "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father." My brothers, this is the Fatherhood that we confess—a Fatherhood that can accept the cross, and that is not humbled to wash his children's feet. This is the Fatherhood that moves the Almighty Will.

And does not even nature, with confused, hesitant voice, suggest the same? What but love is the meaning of the tenderness of the violet and the loveliness of the rose? The golden splendor of the morning and the thousand mystic tints of eve? O, yes, I believe in God the Father, Almighty Creator! The power that is behind the universe, the power that is seen in all the forces of the universe, the power that holds the stars and tints the skies, and puts the soul of motherhood into the eye of woman—this power is an omnipotence of Fatherhood.

We must not, my brethren, let anyone rob us of our faith. Proud-hearted unbelief may have its brief day, but to faith belong the ages. He who would climb the heights and stand beside the victors must needs have faith. The unbelieving are not found among the overcomers who stand amid the final glories. Overcomers are souls who have dared to believe, and who have built their lives upon faith in God the Father, Almighty Creator.

A PRAYER

Enlarge in our hearts the majesty of this precious faith, O thou infinite Triunity of God. Stablish our hearts upon it; that we may be victors, and that our steadfast lives may shine as lights amid the flickering fading lamps of earth. This we ask in Jesus' name. Amen.

CHAPTER II

"JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD"

"And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord."

"The life . . . that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us."
—*1 John 1. 2.*

"Who is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: for by him were all things created, . . . and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church."
—*Colossians 1. 15-17.*

CHAPTER II

"JESUS CHRIST HIS ONLY SON OUR LORD"

In the book of Acts (11. 26) it is recorded that the disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. From our point of view the fact that the disciples were called Christians is not surprising. Our faith centers in Jesus Christ, and "Christian" is the inevitable name for those who have chosen self-identification with him. But the first disciples did not formally organize themselves, did not adopt a name and constitution; rather, they went out into the world with their witness, and the name of the movement which they had espoused was given to it by the impress its emphasis made upon those outside its circle.

"Disciples" was probably the earliest self-designation of the Christian group. Other names were: Believers (1 Timothy 4, 12); Saints (the purified, the devoted to God; Acts 9. 13 (and sixty times in New Testament); Brethren (Acts 6. 3, frequent); The Elect

(Colossians 3. 12, also very common). The Jews called them the sect of the Nazarenes (Acts 24. 5), and probably also those of that way (Acts 9. 2 and 19. 9, 23). One could easily imagine that the pagan world might have called them Theists, or Immortalists—Theists, because of the sublime conception of God as one almighty and all-good; Immortalists, because in a day when for the Gentile world death was a dark shadow of despair and scarcely anyone believed in the future life, they affirmed the resurrection of Jesus from the dead and faced death with an exalted confidence.

In spite of these facts and these circumstances it was inevitable that Christianity and Christians should have become the names of the movement and of the adherents of the religion that had its rise in the stupendous facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth, the divinely accredited Messiah of Israel, the Son of God. Every truth that gave majesty to their present toil and sacrifice, every hope that transfigured the future in which they believed, streamed into their lives from him. Their mission was to be witnesses of his person, his work, his triumph. Their eternity was guaranteed only by his promise. Apart from him they were bankrupt in life here and without any sure word concerning a life there.

PRIMITIVE CHRISTIAN THOUGHT ABSORBED WITH JESUS

From the beginning Christian thought has been vastly occupied with the person of its Lord. From Peter's sermon on the Day of Pentecost until now he has been both the object of its faith and the radiant center of its hope. Believers began almost at once to worship on the first day of the week, because on that day Jesus arose from the dead. Their early worship was made up in large part of recollections of him, of his works, of his teachings and of a memorial meal commemorating his redemptive sacrifice. They filled the chambers of their dead with his symbols. They offered prayer to him. And when amid flame and blood they yielded their lives in martyrdom for his sake, it was his name they whispered in dying; and it was their confidence of immediate reunion with him that turned those experiences of outward tragedy into inward joy and triumph.

The point of view of the primitive church toward Jesus is well expressed by Saint Paul in that noble statement of his letter to the Philippians: "I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of Christ Jesus my Lord; for whom I have suffered the loss of all things, and do count them but dung." This was the spirit of the martyr church. This has been the spirit of the true church all down the centuries. Always it has been occupied supremely with Jesus. There is a hymn that bears the name of Saint Patrick of the fifth century. It is all Christ. It runs:

"Christ with me, Christ before me,
Christ behind me, Christ within me,
Christ beneath me, Christ above me,
Christ at my right, Christ at my left,
Christ in breadth, Christ in length, Christ in height.
Christ in the heart of every man who thinks of me,
Christ in the mouth of every man who speaks to me,
Christ in the eye of every man who sees me,
Christ in the ear of every man that hears me."

In like manner Bernard of Clairveaux wrote to a friend: "If you write to me, nothing therein has savor unless I read Jesus in it. If you discourse or converse, nothing therein is agreeable to me unless in it also Jesus sounds. Jesus is honey to the mouth, melody to the ear, a song of jubilee in the heart. He is our medicine as well. Is any one of you saddened? Let Jesus come into his heart . . . and at the rising illumination of his name every cloud flees away." This was the twelfth century. Later at the dawn of modern times Martin Luther stirred to new life the whole of Christendom simply by wiping away the dust of superstition that had been hiding the glory of Christ from the hearts of men. He showed them again his all sufficient Redeemerhood, and as a result the face of life was changed.

Yes, we are Christians because Christ is our life. In our little self-willed independence we are dead. As Christians we have become united to Christ by faith. He is our glory. He is our crown.

It is popular to-day to say that Christianity is a life. It is; but it is a life that springs out of faith in Jesus Christ. Christians are men who believe something about Jesus Christ, who are related to him by a self-intrusting faith, who experience a resultant moral and religious transformation, and who are, therefore, new creatures in him.

What Christians Believe About Jesus

The things that Christians believe about Jesus have been summarized in the second section of the church's historic creed.

We believe that he is God the eternal Son, the only begotten of the Father; that he was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; that he suffered under Pontius Pilot, yielding his life by the will of God a sacrifice for sin, that he died and was buried; that he rose from the dead the third day, leaving the grave open and empty behind him, and ascending into heaven; that he is there enthroned the King of kings and Lord of lords, turning and overturning all down the centuries; that he will come again at last to judge the quick and the dead and to establish the final purpose of God. This is our faith about him. It has its ground in sure history. It is further strengthened by the appeal it makes to our hearts both in its power to satisfy our longings and to fulfill our consciences. We feel that these things are true; that we want them true; that they ought to be true: and so we venture upon them; we abandon ourselves to him; we rest our very souls; we trust; and trusting, we are united to him by the Holy Spirit. The consequence of this relationship is salvation. It is justification from the guilt of sin, deliverance from the power of sin, sanctification of life unto God, and the promise of the resurrection and of life everlasting. All of these benefits are the free gift of God to us in Jesus Christ. It is therefore a most fitting thing that we, who receive them, should be called Christians, since we are men and women alive forever and infinitely glorified only in and through him.

THE DOCTRINE ARISES IN THE EXPERIENCE OF SALVATION

This fact of Christ's redemptive significance and sufficiency had a commanding influence in the great doctrinal discussions of the fourth century. It is often said, but untruly said, that Roman politics determined the issue at Nicæa. The truth is that the redemptive needs of men, the needs they had found satisfied in their experience of relation to Jesus, determined it. Writing of this very matter Bishop Charles Gore says: "We observe here, as perhaps nowhere else in history, a corporate consciousness, the mind of a society gradually taking explicit and formal shape. Underneath the superficial disturbances of the church's life, one steady current has been moving. Beneath general confusions of thought, violent partisanships, imperial influences—stronger than all in the result, stronger to the point of obliterating their traces from the final product—one continuous faith or consciousness has been holding its own and gaining clearer expression" (*The Incarnation of the Son of God,* pp. 95-96).

I can see those Fathers at Nicæa, some of them with the marks of their martyrdom upon them: twisted in body, maimed, burned, gathered to discuss the essential nature of Him who is the center of their faith, and for whose sake they have suffered these things. Arius and his supporters present their statement. It makes Jesus a created being. He is like God; but he is not God. There was a time when he was not. But such a figure cannot bear the strain of man's redemption: and such a figure cannot be the definition of that Person presented in the New Testament Scriptures and for joy of faith in whom the martyr church for three centuries has been willing to burn rather than to confuse him with a man. No wonder the council repudiated Arius and condemned his writings.

All that Christian men had cherished, all that they had suffered for, all that they had dared and bled for was being taken away from them. Here was the issue at Nicæa, as those men saw it. The age of the martyrs was past. Faith was recognized. Should speculative cleverness now do what the fires of persecution had failed to do—rob Jesus of the isolated grandeur of his deity and humanity of its Saviour? The answer of the church was an emphatic "No." It saved the Faith of the Ages.

THE DIFFERENCE OF WORDS AT NICÆA

Doubtless, it is true that the difference between the creed of Athanasius and of Arius can be expressed by the change of one single diphthong in one single word. Sometimes men stress this circumstance to belittle the significance of that long-ago debate; but their point is utterly shallow. Words are but symbols, the tools of thought. The tools may differ but slightly. It does not matter. The thought alone signifies. In the words by which we express them Christ and antichrist differ only by a prefix, but in the thoughts they express they differ by infinity. So it was with the difference between the Arian and

Athanasian views. Those of Arius came to be represented in the word homoiousion—"of similar essence"—while those of Athanasius came to be represented in the word homoousion—"of the same essence." One letter is the difference between the word symbols; but infinity is the difference between the ideas.

THE ISSUE TO-DAY

It is the same difference we are facing today. Modern unbelief is trying to teach us to be satisfied with saying: "Jesus Christ is like God. He is the perfect moral expression of God." But the Christian Church of to-day, if it knows its gospel, will refuse the deception, as did the Christian Church of sixteen centuries ago. It will say, "Jesus Christ is not simply *like* God; he *is* God; he is the everlasting Son of the Father incarnate in human nature and flesh."

THE INCARNATION

Jesus, then, is the everlasting personal Son of God become manifest in the stream of history as man. The Father gave his Son. The Son yielded himself. Oh, how deep the mystery! How wonderful the sacrifice! He empties himself of his glory. He shuts down the measure of his measureless consciousness to the narrow experience of human infancy. He yielded himself to the Holy Spirit to be hidden away in the silence and unconsciousness of Mary's helpless babe. No, God did not cease to be God; but God the Son did cease to know himself as God. He shut himself up to so much of his full self-knowledge and self-grasp as he could bring to expression through the human nature he had taken upon himself.

It is an abyss; a mystery. Created intellect cannot hope to understand it; but this limitation is nothing against the incarnation; for created intellect cannot understand itself. The incarnation no more transcends my understanding than does my own consciousness of time or space or life or beginnings. Mysteries are all about us. Our halting minds must move reverently, not dogmatically, among them. There are two experiences, one in my own life and one described in literature, which in part illuminate the mystery of the incarnation.

In 1908 I graduated from the theological seminary. My mind was full of its technical language. They sent me to a church over in Ocean County on the edge of the pine belt.

Into my community there came one day, sick and waiting to die, one of those uneducated men from the pines. He had never been to school. He did not know how old he was. He could speak only in words of one syllable. He was desperately ignorant. I went to call on him; he told me he was dying. He said, "I would like to know the way to God." I started to tell him about the Saviour.

He asked, "Who's he?"

I said, "He's the Redeemer."

He asked again, "Who's that?"

And then I realized I must forget everything I knew, every word I familiarly used, and find a way to tell the mystery and wonder of Christ in words of one syllable. Oh, but it was hard! It would be hard even to-day; but it was exceedingly hard then, just after I had finished a theological course, when my mind was full of the language of the schools. I asked God to help me, and I ruled out of my mind everything but words of one syllable. I said: "I will know only what this man knows. I will tell the story of Jesus in his language." Well, in a way, that was an incarnation. I was trying to live inside the measure of that man's life. The difference between my incarnation and the Saviour's was that I still knew myself in all my larger experiences, and only limited myself in expression, while he limited himself also even in his self-grasp. In the incarnation the Son of God became one with our humanity in its narrowest experience—that of human infancy.

The other illustration—and I rejoice to think of it—is from the book called *The Rosary.* You remember the heroine. Her name was Jane; and Jane loved a man who was blind. She feared to marry him lest because of his blindness she might fail to understand him. And then one day Jane said to herself: "I will limit myself to the size of his experience. I will bandage my eyes, and no matter how confused I get, I will not see." So she put the bandage on her eyes; and, when she became confused and lost about the house she did not remove it to find herself, but worried her way through, groping out of her bewilderment as he must. And so she came to know all his narrow, cramped experience until she felt that she could understand him. And, my brethren, that is Jesus. He is God's Son bandaged with our humanity. He took upon himself our weariness, our hunger, our dying. Yet He who slept in the stern of the boat, exhausted and weary, had within him the authority that could rise from sleep and speak a word that would silence both wind and wave. And He who felt our hunger could take five loaves and two fishes and multiply them until they were sufficient to feed a multitude. And He who bowed his head to take our death, possessed within himself the power of the resurrection that could burst the sepulcher and leap forth to everlasting life.

The incarnation—how wonderful it is! We sit here and we say: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; conceived by the Holy Ghost; born of the Virgin Mary; suffering under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead, buried, risen, ascended, triumphant, returning. Allelujah! Yes, I believe!"

The Incarnation! It is the overflow of the heart of the Infinite Father. It is God giving himself to men in boundless measure. It is the ocean watering the whole earth and leaving as a remainder behind it the measureless fullness of the sea. It is the sun lighting up the worlds and the stars with the splendor of its overflow and leaving behind the inexhaustibleness of its own blinding glory. It is the love of God from which neither height nor depth can separate us, that streams to us in Jesus Christ our Lord.

THE INCARNATION INEVITABLE

My brothers, love like God's love cannot stand apart from our human sorrow. We are defeated; we are in pain; we are ill; we are dying. The Father cannot let us suffer thus and remain afar. He must come near us, infinitely, tenderly near. And so, foreseeing all our life's failures and guiltiness, before creation, he gave his Son to be our Redeemer. Far back in the morning years of history he told us he would come to us. All down through the centuries the hope of his coming grew apace. Paganism longed for him, but knew not of him. Israel knew of his coming and waited for him, but failed to understand. But, oh, he came! There were angel messengers and the light of a wondrous star. There were angel songs and the wonder of a virgin mother. But these were only the settings of his glory. His true glory was within. It shone in resplendent luster through those three immortal years: the glory of his moral fidelity, the glory of his personal sinlessness, the glory of his incomparably religious soul, the glory of his mastership of the forces of nature. The ages can never grow weary of him. We stand forever abashed before his perfect life. We find our best idea of God in his character; our best confidence and one sure hope in his conquest of the tomb.

"Jesus! the name high over all
In earth, or hell or sky;
Angels and men before him fall,
And devils fear and fly."

SAINT JOHN'S ESTIMATE OF JESUS

Who is he? We will let one answer who sat nearest to him through all these mighty events. John, one of his apostles, the beloved. He was one of the first two who followed him; one of the favored three who saw the mystery of his raising of Jairus' daughter from the dead; one again of those who on the top of Hermon gazed at the new glory of his transfiguration. He listened to his most intimate teachings, and has reported them. It was he alone of the Twelve who stood beneath his cross when he died. He was the first to catch the significance of the empty sepulcher and to believe in his resurrection. He spent fifty illuminated years in meditation and wonder upon his glory. Then at the end of his life, just before he went out into the mystery of the everlastings, he wrote his Gospel, and introduced it with his matchless prologue. Here is this apostle's estimate of Jesus:

Standing at the beginning, and looking backward across the abyss of eternity, we see the Son of God; and the Son of God is in perpetual fellowship with his Father; and the Son of God is himself everlasting God. All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. And the Son was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we have beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten Son of God, full of grace and truth.

A Closing Vision

I see a mighty movement coming down the centuries. It is an increasing expression of the personal will of Holy God. How wonderful it is!

First, there was the law of physical being—just dead, silent matter that never moved except when the wind blew it or the earthquake heaved it; stately, lifeless motion, has being like the sea and the mountains.

Then Almighty God willed, and in the midst of the vast dead world there appeared life;

a new and different law. It was bare life. Its resources were limited. It could not move; it could only grow in the place where it found itself. It could only grow if food came to it. If food did not come, it was helpless; it died. Nevertheless, measured by the law of inorganic matter, it was supernatural.

And then the mighty, holy, personal God willed again. He lifted life from the level of mere stationary being up to that of freedom and activity. He made the animal world, which, in a dull way, can experience desire and work out ends. This new content of the law of life in the animal world will again be seen as supernatural if measured by the law of plant life below it.

Once more God willed. He willed the soul of man. He lifted the plan of life from partial freedom, and dull half-realized desires, as in the beast, up to moral freedom and the self-conscious personality of man. Again, measured by the standard of the lower life, there is the supernatural; and to the degree that man is actually free he is not only supernatural but transcendent. But it is not yet complete, for not yet is man fully free. God gave him a measure of freedom only that he might prove him. He gave him to know within bounds and to will within bounds. He walled him in with limitations. He limited him by his body; that is, his power to achieve was limited by the body's power to perform. He sent upon him sickness, age, and death—oh, how great and yet how short of his full greatness is man!

Is this the end? It cannot be. God has lifted being from mere existence up to the glory of moral personality. Man stands majestic yet helpless. He visions the utter sublimity of God, yet cannot rise into it. Will there be no last lift? Will life fail here just below the summit of sublimity?

And then at last in the fullness of time there is an answer. God himself comes to us. Messiah is at once God and man. He is God, the Creator, come as man into the stream of history. In his sublime life manhood is lifted to the ideal. He is *The Life*. In him manhood is fully free. He is master of every power of the universe. He is ethically perfect. He yields himself to death, but he is master of death. He is fully transcendent, limited by no other law than the moral law of his own holiness. Here is creation consummated. Here is the prophecy and promise of man's destiny.

This vision of creation finished in Jesus, this vision of an answer in him to all man's age-old need—this is the vision that I behold as I believe. And I do believe; yes, I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son, my Lord; conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary; suffering under Pontius Pilate, crucified, dead and buried for my redemption; triumphing over death; leaving the grave spoiled and ruined behind him; ascending into heaven; pointing the way for the human race out into the sublimity of that final holy freedom, the full transcendence of God.

Prayer

O my Christ! my Lord! my All in all! my Saviour! my Life! my Portion for time and eternity! To be one with thee is to possess all things. Thou art all riches, all glory, all truth. Thou art salvation. Joined to thee, life is one increasing triumph; death disappears, and our free lives ascend to share the very throne divine.

O holy Lord Jesus, God and Saviour, thou art glorious beyond all power of words to speak thy glory. Thou art divine beyond all language. Thou art wonderful beyond all utterance. Heal thou our wounded souls. Empower our faltering lives and lift us up. Lift us into the completeness of thine own powers, that we may live with thee sharing the majesty of thy transcendence under no law but the law of thy perfect will. Amen.

CHAPTER III

“CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”

“Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.”

“And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.”—*John 1. 14.*

“And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one.”—*John 17. 22.*

CHAPTER III

"CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY"

WE are thinking of the incarnation and of the mystery of the virgin birth. We are thinking of them, however, not as isolated historical facts but as one mighty event in the unfolding of the creative and redemptive purpose of the everlasting God. Before we seek to grasp the noble fact itself let us first pause to glimpse its lovely setting.

THE EVENT

I never quite knew what the word "city" meant in the Bible until I had walked among the villages of France. They are not cities in our sense of the word. Often they are but little mountain settlements, a bit larger than our ordinary city blocks, built on the tops of the hills. I am seeing one of them in my mind's eye now—the ruined village of Crayonne. It was there along one of the great French roads. It was built of white sandstone. The houses were low and square-roofed.

Some of them were of one story, others of two. There was one main street in the town. It was narrow. Crossing it were other shorter streets, and these too were narrow. Precisely such was the Bethlehem in which Jesus was born—a compact mountain village; and like a city only in its compactness. It was built of the native limestone of Syria. It was a white mountain village up among the Judæan hills. At the eastern end of the city, overlooking a lovely valley, was the khan. It was not a hotel. It was more like a modern tourist camp—just a square inclosure, with a platform upon four sides, where the traveler could make his own bed and find protection from the night and from robbers. It was a haven of rest to which each one brought his own comforts, whether of bedding or of food.

Near the khan were a number of small grottoes—caves in the sides of the hill. Some of them may have been quarries from which stones had been taken to build the houses of the city. This was customary in the ancient world, and is still customary in Europe, not to uncover a quarry but to make the entrance from the side of the hill and leave it covered. They often used these quarry caves for stables and even for human shelters. So it was when Jesus was born. There was no room for him in the khan. They found a place in a cave in the side of the hill and there eternal Deity became incarnate.

It is all familiar; we can see it now: the rocks, the grotto, the pile of sweet new straw lying in a trough in the floor, the pine torch with its smoking light stuck in a crack of the rock. And there, amid the simplicity of nature unadorned, the Son of God came to be the Saviour of the world.

Outside the Christmas star rained its fire into the silent night, and up and down the narrow streets men walked and talked. They talked of this and that. They talked of the star. They talked of Cæsar. They talked of Rome and of the census. Nobody talked about Jesus, for nobody knew he had come. It is always so. The great events of life are ushered in unannounced. There is no blare of trumpets when really great things are done. These are done in the silence of God, like the beginning of life and the mystery of death.

It is all quite clear before us. There is little question about the site of the cave. Justin Martyr knew it in his day and speaks about Jesus being born in a cave near the end of Bethlehem. Jerome, one of the first scholars of the Christian Church, who wrote in the fourth century, lived near the cave of Bethlehem, and there translated the Bible from the Hebrew and the Greek into the Latin. In the year 327 Helen, the mother of Constantine the Great, erected a splendid church over what she believed to be the site of the Nativity of Jesus, and this is the oldest Christian building in the world. It stands to-day very much the same as it was two thousand years ago. Bethlehem is still a little mountain city. It has the same white houses built of the same native rock, the same narrow streets. It overlooks the same valley of the shepherds. Eastward from the summit of the hill, and northward, the same walls of the Holy City greet the gaze of the traveler. The chief difference is that, whereas, in Joseph's time there was a grotto, to-day there is a church, a shrine, to mark the holy place where the Son of God was born.

Can you imagine yourself standing there on some Christmas morning, looking eastward into the grotto of the Nativity? Silver lamps are hanging above your head, and a silver star is shining on the pavement at your feet. You read the inscription, "Here, by the Virgin Mary, Jesus Christ was born." Can you believe it? Can you really believe that a child, born there of a virgin, was in very fact the Son of God—the Eternal Word of God—the Mystery of Power that created the universe? Can you believe it? Oh, how blessed to believe!

AS TO MYSTERY

Someone says: "But I cannot believe. The mystery is too great. My mind recoils from mysteries. I can only accept that which is clear and simple and certain." Well, my brother, then you can accept nothing: for nothing is clear and simple and certain. Everything is in a cloud. Everything is a mystery. I do not think there is any one fact that our modern world needs to learn so much as it needs to learn the mystery of everything.

After winter comes the spring. We put aside our heavy coats, don our lighter wear, and go out into the woods to gather wild flowers. We say: "This is the first arbutus of spring. How familiar it is! I can almost smell its fragrance now—the little low flower, so pink, so sweet!" And yet it is utterly mysterious. I do not know what the flower is. I do not know one thing about the mystery of that power which in the sun wakes the flowers from their winter sleep and brings new activity everywhere, where before all was dormant and seemingly dead. It is as utterly mysterious as the virgin birth of Jesus. If, as I stood there in the woods, suddenly, beneath my feet, the brown roots of a violet should turn green, and a purple flower should shoot up amid the green, and in thirty seconds a violet be in full bloom, it would be no more mysterious than it is when this same thing is done in six weeks. Both are utterly mysterious.

There are two kinds of mysteries: familiar mysteries and unfamiliar mysteries; but the familiar mysteries are just as mysterious as those that are unfamiliar. Here, for example, is a new home. A young man and his bride have organized it. We remember when they built it. And then some day there is a third little tenant in their cottage. It is absolutely mysterious. Once it was two; now it is three; and nobody understands how. There in his modern cradle lies a mystery of flesh and soul as utterly beyond our understanding as the wonder of the little Lord Jesus born of Nazareth's virgin maiden. Have you ever counted up the mysteries that envelop every infant's birth? There are the mysteries of his body with its marvelous network of nerves; its bones, its muscles, its system of blood supply, its organs with their specialized functions, and all built of one identical protoplasm. There are his eyes, his ears, his brain, and behind these his mind that abides consciously identical across all the flux of life and experience. Mystery! The man who because the virgin birth of Jesus is a mystery, stumbles over the fact, must be a very thoughtless man indeed: for every fundamental experience of life is a complete mystery no matter how familiar and seemingly comprehensible it may be.

Take the mystery of the experience of consciousness. You are sitting in your living room with a book in your hands. You say, "I know," but as to how you know, you have no more idea than you have of how the Son of God became incarnate. As you sit there reading, a choice of motives drifts into your consciousness, and you say, "I will." You start in motion a new series of forces, a series that may perhaps last on for a thousand years and make life different all along the way. What is this power of your will? How does it break into the causation of nature? These things are absolute mysteries. You have no slightest contact with them. As you sit thus meditating you fall asleep, and your book falls from your hand. You awake with a start. You say, "I was asleep, and gravitation caused my book to fall to the floor." And what is sleep? What is gravitation? Answer: They are names that hide from the thoughtless their ignorance; familiar words that conceal from us the constant mystery of life—the mystery of every fundamental value.

Once more: It is morning. The light of the sun wakes me from my sleep. Science tells me that this light has streamed to me across nearly a hundred millions of miles of space. But wait. What is light? What is space? How does light travel through space? How does it reach my consciousness? How am I aware that I am the same being that I was last night? These are all common experiences, but they are all complete mysteries.

Concerning no one of these questions can I make even the beginning of an answer. And shall I then stumble because of the mystery of the virgin birth, or because I do not know how the Infinite Mind could empty himself of the glorious fullness of his consciousness? Such objections do no credit to my thoughtfulness. They reveal me as a superficial thinker who is quite beyond his depth in the deep fundamental questions of life.

My brothers, the trouble with much of the profound thinking of the twentieth century is that it is not profound. The trouble with much of the learning of our universities is that it is not learned. We are stumbling over our own shallowness and thinking it is profundity. We are stumbling over our own ignorance and thinking it is learning. If only we were more profound and more learned, we would stand in wonder and worship with the shepherds and worship the Babe of Bethlehem.

THE PRECIOUS RECORD

Here is the precious record, and oh, how sweet it is, and how high is the privilege that is ours! "And the angel answered and said unto her. . . ." Why should there not be angels? It would be as easy to believe that there could not be men as to believe there could not be angels. "And the angel answered and said unto her, The Holy Spirit shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee; therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." A few months later Joseph led his betrothed down across the hills, and through the valleys and over the steeps, and into Bethlehem. There in the cave he builds her bed of straw. There, beneath the light of the Christmas star, Jesus the Saviour of men is born.

How can this immensity of truth be brought within our experience? It is the touch of experience that gives reality to an idea. Let us approach it through an illustration. I could hold in the open palm of my hand an ounce of guncotton. I could place that guncotton upon the open palm of a little baby. Then I might say to him: "If I should send a vibration through this substance, under certain conditions, I could loosen the invisible bands that hold its atoms together so safely. The result would be the substance of the guncotton would suddenly become expanded some hundreds of thousands of times—there would be an explosion." I might go on: "If only I knew how, I could loosen yet other bands more mysterious, until all the electrical centers of the atoms would be freed, and I could let loose out of that small ounce of guncotton enough power to move the earth itself." And yet all this vast power might lie there safely in the hand of a little baby. I think this is as mysterious as the incarna-

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tion. The incarnation simply says that all the Omnipotence of Almighty God is hidden behind the wee form of Mary's Babe—that's all. It is no greater mystery.

Or, again, think of a most learned mind. The erudition that is stored in its fifteen or sixteen ounces of brain substance if written out on paper would be a library, to handle which would require a large card index elaborately cross-indexed. And yet all that learning is stored in the small compass of a human brain; and it is so perfectly at command that every piece of information is instantly in consciousness the moment it is desired. Let us catalogue the wonders included in this fact of ordinary experience: First, the brain is only the ordinary protoplasm of all man's life which here has developed a specialized function. Second, protoplasm cannot know: therefore brain must simply be the nexus through which a totally intangible spirit comes into contact with sense experience, both to act and to be acted upon. Third, the total area of knowledge must be constantly in possession of the knowing mind, notwithstanding it is not constantly in consciousness. This is necessary to explain the immediacy of recollection, and also because any memory which ceases as memory has ceased altogether. As I face this mystery of man's own mind and its relation to his brain, I am conscious of no increased difficulty when I affirm that the spirit mind which came to expression in Bethlehem's Babe was Deity incarnate.

IT WAS LOVE

"Why did God become man?" asked Anselm in one of the great books of a thousand years. The answer to that question is, Love. "God is love," wrote John. Love made God become incarnate. There is no true description of God that leaves love out of the equation. You and I will never understand creation until we understand it in the terms of God's love. We will never understand heaven until we understand it in the terms of God's love. And when we properly understand eternal punishment it will be because we see finality of judgment also as an expression of God's boundless love. God is love. His righteousness is the oughtness of his love and his love is the glad self-giving of his righteousness. Starting, then, with the fact that God is love, the incarnation becomes inevitable. It belongs to love to come near its beloved; and it belongs to love to come near its beloved especially when that beloved is in danger or sorrow. God is love; and because God is love the incarnation was a certainty from the first moment that sin's threatening darkness invaded the life of the race.

One of the sweetest records of the New Testament is the one in which Thomas says to his friends, the apostles of Jesus: "Let us also go, that we may die with him." It would not do any good. Thomas did not think it would do any good. He just knew that it was dangerous for Jesus to go to Bethany, and so he said, "If he is going to Bethany, I want to go with him, and die with him, for I would rather die with him than be separated from him." That is human love; and it is also Love Divine. If we can realize a necessity for human love to share the stress and strain, and tragedy of suffering, we must recognize that eternal love, which is the perfection of all love, cannot stand aloof, just watching men sin and die. And so Christ came to us because God is love. He came to us because all of God is forever love. He laid aside his glory. He suffered his infinite consciousness to be imprisoned in the soul and body of Bethlehem's tiny Babe. He experienced our growing years. He felt our weariness and our temptations. He faced our ruin. In Gethsemane's garden he bowed under the burden of our sin. On Golgotha's cross he lifted up the darkness of our death into the life of God. From end to end he took all of our life's failure and woe. He made himself one with us. Oh, it is sweet, even though it were all futile and in vain! If I must sin and die, it is infinitely blessed to know that God cares enough to come and stand by me in my experiences, even though his dying were as futile as Thomas' thought of dying when he said, "Let us also go, that we may die with him." There is something sublimely helpful about love sharing even life's hopeless tragedies with its beloved.

But the coming of the Son of God into the human race is not a mere impotency of helpless sympathy. It is big with redemptive power. It is God coming to us that he might lift us out of our futility into the glory of his infinite life. Have you ever felt the majesty of the lifting power of God? Saint Paul pictures it in his letter to the Ephesians as the power which lifted Christ from the shame and ruin and humiliation of the cross to the very glory of the throne. He calls men fools who cavil, doubting or limiting God's power. To everything, he said, God giveth it a body as it pleaseth him. Creation displays his imagination and resource, but it does not bound his powers. There is one glory of the sun, and another glory of the moon, and another glory of the stars; and then beyond all this is the glory of God's final purpose. The Revelator sees the tree of Life bearing twelve manner of fruit, and yielding its fruit every month. It is an expression of the inexhaustible resource of the imagination and power of God; and all this infinite power is both morally and omnipotently given to the human race in Christ.

How wonderful it is! God could sit upon his throne and clothe the world with verdure by a word. By a word he could people its forests with the animate creation and with thinking men and women who would change its forests into cities. These things cost God nothing. He spoke and it was done. But when sin, through man's abuse of his freedom, broke into the order of God's worlds he could not sit upon his throne and speak. Then "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." At Creation Deity made us in his own image. At the incarnation Deity took our image upon himself. And it is not just tender sympathy. It is omnipotent, redeeming power. Beyond the manger we see Golgotha's cross, Jerusalem's riven tomb, and Olivet's ascending Lord. He is ascending, and he is lifting! lifting! lifting! With those pierced hands, he is lifting death; lifting the weight of human sin; lifting sinners into the glory of his own Sonship. There is a verse in John's Gospel that puts it. It is in Jesus' great prayer. He is standing face to face with his Father. He is looking across the span of the centuries. The misery of the world was the background of his thinking: "Father," he says, "I will that all these men and women should be one; and even as you and I are one; and all the glory"—yes, he says it, the glory—all "the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

"O, my Lord, what hast thou given?" And he answers: "I have given you my glory. I have given you my very all. I have given you the resource of my omnipotence to lift you out of your present limitation and failure. I have given you the resource of my omniscience that you might be equipped to sit with me upon my throne. I have given you myself, taking my place beside you in the sordid stream of your history, that I might redeem and lift you to the vision of my glory—the vision of the eternal love of God for God."

This is the mystery of Bethlehem's Babe. Our proud intellects sink in humility and silence, and in the stillness there is a voice which cries:

"Fall on your knees!
O hear the angels' voices!
O love divine!
O night when Christ was born!
O love divine!
O night when Christ was born!"

PRAYER

O Lord Jesus Christ! Thou King of kings and Lord of lords, never more kingly than when thou didst imprison thy glories in the soul of Bethlehem's Babe. Educate us beyond our learning until we are wise; until in the simplicity of holy love we can dare to believe in thy infinite love which has redeemed us by so great a sacrifice. Amen.

CHAPTER IV

“CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY”

(CONTINUED)

"Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit; born of the Virgin Mary."

"And Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ."
—*Matthew 1. 16.*

"And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being (as was supposed) the son of Joseph, which was the son of Heli."—*Luke 3. 23.*

CHAPTER IV

"CONCEIVED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT, BORN OF THE VIRGIN MARY"

(CONTINUED)

THE virgin birth of Jesus is not only a question for moral and spiritual faith, it is also a question for the intellect, and before faith can ever be complete the intellect must be satisfied. Consequently, a merely devotional approach is not sufficient. We must study this great Christian affirmation also as a historical proposition. There are three principal lines of criticism bearing upon it: First, that it violates science; second, that its support in the New Testament document is inadequate; third, that it is a legendary addition to the gospel, a common idea in Jesus' day, and one often associated with great personalities. These three criticisms have wide recognition at the present time, and their force must be met if faith in the virgin birth of Jesus is to continue. Our brief statement will undertake to meet in detail each one of these criticisms, and then to present the value of this truth for Christian faith.

That the virgin birth of Jesus does violence to the conclusions of the natural sciences, we emphatically deny. There are two propositions. To make Jesus Christ, a pre-existing divine personality become incarnate, the result of human generation would be a greater violation of the orderliness of nature than to believe that his incarnation took place by extraordinary virgin conception. Again, since there has been only one divine incarnation in the course of recorded history, it is quite impossible for us to make a scientific induction, and without making an induction, science cannot discuss the question of incarnation. To identify the incarnation with the ordinary beginning of human life is to confuse things that are by definition different, and so to vitiate one's whole intellectual process. If a gardener should plant a rose seed and get an oak tree as a result, it would be no greater a violation of the processes of nature than it would have been for the Son of God to have become incarnate by the process of ordinary human generation. But the more important truth is that incarnation, if it be a fact, is quite outside the possibility of scientific discussion. To speculate as to what under any given circumstance must be the divine method of procedure is not science, and no clear scientific mind could make the mistake of regarding it as such. No careful thinker could possibly allege that there is scientific opposition to the faith of the virgin birth of the incarnate Son of God. The whole discussion transcends science. It is as divinely unique as the first morning of creation, and as humanly unapproachable as any fundamental act of God. If God does a thing once, we can only believe and wonder. When God does a thing repeatedly, we can observe accurately what he has done, and state its formal law. This is our science and the bounds of our intellectual possibilities.

The second discussion concerning the virgin birth deals with its New Testament evidences. It is widely asserted that the idea only appears in two out of the four Gospels, and was entirely unknown both to John and Paul. Negation sometimes goes further, and denies that the Lukan account is authentic, limiting the witness to the virgin birth to a single Gospel. Are these statements correct? Again we answer with an emphatic negative. We take first the question of Luke's testimony.

It is alleged that verses 34 and 35 of his first chapter may be an interpolation, on which supposition there would be no record of the virgin birth in the third Gospel. There are two answers to this suggestion. First, there is no manuscript authority to support the idea of a corruption of the text at this point. Every unmutilated copy of Luke's Gospel contains the record of the virgin conception of the Son of God. There is no historical basis whatsoever for the view that the birth story was a late addition to Luke's account. Again, these verses are not entirely isolated in Luke's Gospel, but are supported by other statements of the evangelist. In Luke 3. 23 there is a very interesting record made that excludes the idea that Joseph was the father of the child. In stating Jesus' paternity, Luke specifically notices that Joseph was not in actual fact his father, but was only called his father according to the Jewish custom of making records under certain circumstances. Luke's words are *ως νομιζετο* (*"os nomizelot"*), which mean "according to the custom." The verse would read, "And Jesus himself began to be about thirty years of age, being, according to the custom (of the Jews recorded) the son of

Joseph, which was the son of Heli." In Luke 2. 5 there is a second record which also weighs heavily against the supposition that the evangelist regarded Joseph as the father of Jesus. In this verse there is a record of Mary's approaching motherhood, and it is specifically stated that she was not the wife of Joseph, but only his espoused wife. Luke could have had no purpose whatever for making this notation had not the record of Jesus' virgin conception already been set down.

It will be interesting to observe in passing that Luke's genealogy is almost certainly that of Mary rather than that of Joseph. Joseph is placed at the beginning of the line as the son of Heli because it is not the custom of the Jews to include women in their genealogical record, and when the woman's line is made use of, the son-in-law takes the place of the daughter. This will explain why Luke makes Joseph the son of Heli, while Matthew makes him the son of Jacob. Dr. Campbell Morgan quotes the Hebrew Mishna, which was reduced to writing in the third century, as authority for the statement that Heli was the father of Mary, the mother of Jesus.

The evidence of Matthew's Gospel is equally explicit with that of Luke. He presents the genealogy of Joseph, but excludes Joseph from the paternity of Mary's child, saying, "Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born Jesus, who is called Christ." (Matthew 1. 16.) He then goes on to detail that the conception of Jesus was by the Holy Spirit, and to point out that the marriage of Joseph and Mary was not consummated until after Jesus had been born.

Such are the records in Matthew and Luke, but it is clearly mistaken to affirm that these are the only references to the virgin birth in the New Testament, and that John and Paul were totally ignorant of the idea. The uniform word for "birth" in the New Testament is γενὰω (*genao*), and it is a striking fact that Paul does not use this word to describe the birth of Jesus. Instead, he uses repeatedly, the Greek γινομαι (*ginomai*), which is nowhere else used in the New Testament of "birth" except in relationship to the birth of Jesus. This peculiar usage by Paul is striking; and if it be not warrant for affirming his complete familiarity with the truth of the virgin birth, it is at least sufficient warrant to exclude any intelligent and sincere assertion of his ignorance. We give a list of New Testament passages in which the verb *"ginomai,"* "to become," is used instead of the verb *"genao,"* "to be born." Romans 1. 3: "Jesus Christ our Lord which became of the seed of David." Galatians 4. 4: "God sent forth his Son, become of a woman." Philippians 2. 7: "But made himself of no reputation, and became in the form of a servant." Hebrews 7. 16: "Who became, not after the law of a carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life." John 1. 14: "And the Word became flesh." Again we say that this unique usage, found in the New Testament nowhere except in speaking of the birth of Jesus, if it does not make certain the familiarity of Paul with our Lord's virgin conception, certainly does make it impossible for any intelligent and sincere writer dogmatically to deny Paul's knowledge of those facts.

The statement that John also was ignorant as to the virgin birth is equally a gratuity. The author of the fourth Gospel has an expression which he uses in connection with Jesus which is most suggestive. He speaks of him as "the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father" (John 1. 18), and as "the only begotten of the Father" (John 1. 14). Either this expression is a veiled reference to the virgin birth or John is teaching the Athanasian doctrine of the eternal begetting of the Son here in the first century. It is perfectly clear that John does teach the deity and preexistence of Jesus. He is God with God by whom all things were made. He was in the everlasting, and became incarnate in time; and he nowhere refers to Joseph as the father of Jesus, but on the contrary does repeatedly refer to God as his Father.

Furthermore, John had unquestionably seen the synoptic Gospels when he wrote, for his account contains several corrections of popular misapprehensions of those records. Thus he takes the trouble to notice that Jesus departed from Judæa into Galilee twice; once before John was imprisoned, which is not referred to by Matthew; and the second time, after John was in prison, which is the one noted in Matthew 4. 12. John would never have suffered the account of the virgin birth in Matthew to go unchallenged if he had had any question about it.

Another item is of curious interest only. An interesting variation of John 1. 13 makes it a definite setting forth of the fact of Jesus' virgin birth. The variant makes the relative and the verb both singular, and reads, “Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” In this form the statement concerns Jesus, and is an affirmation of his supernatural origin. The variant has, however, none of the great manuscripts behind it. Westcott and Hort give it as a Latin reading in the appendix of their text. Irenæus quotes this passage three times, and always in this Latin form. Tertullian insists that this is the original reading. He explains the plural forms of our text as a corruption due to Gnostic influences. (*Godet’s Commentary, ad loc.*)

3 The third objection to the virgin birth of Jesus is the widely made assertion that the idea of virgin birth was common in the paganism of Jesus’ day; that such men as Cæsar Augustus and Buddha Gautama were supposed to have been virgin born. If these assertions were true, it would make faith in the virgin birth of Jesus exceedingly difficult; but the interesting fact is, not only are they untrue, but they are totally without foundation. It is difficult to understand how any honest writer could ever have confused the gross pagan stories of gods cohabiting with women with the New Testament record of the

virgin birth of Jesus. But the fact is there is no parallel, and the record of Jesus' virgin birth is as unique in the history of his day as it would be in the history of ours. Justin Martyr, writing at the middle of the second Christian century, pointed out the wide difference between these two ideas. We quote from his First Apology, Chapter XXXIII:

"But lest someone, not understanding the prophecy now cited, should charge us with the very things we have been laying to the charge of the poets, who say that Jupiter went into a woman through lust, let us try to explain the word. This, then, 'behold, a virgin shall conceive,' signifies that a virgin should conceive without intercourse; for if she had had intercourse with anyone whatsoever, she was no longer a virgin; but the power of God, having come upon the virgin, overshadowed her and caused her, while yet a virgin, to conceive." Any scholar who quotes these pagan myths as a parallel to the virgin conception of Jesus is either quite without information or else has failed in sincerity.

The so-called virgin conception of Buddha Gautama is equally without foundation. Here is the material as set forth by Charles Francis Aiken in his volume, *Buddha Stories*:

Buddha's mother was a woman named Maya, the wife of one of India's petty kings named Suddhodana. Maya, after her marriage, was for some time childless, and then one night while she lay asleep, she dreamed and in her dream she saw the Buddha as a small white elephant enter her side. At that moment Buddha became incarnate in her. Coincident with this event, a light of surpassing brightness filled ten thousand worlds. Blind men saw, deaf men heard, dumb men spake, lame men walked. The birds cut short their flight, the rivers ceased to flow, flowers of all kinds burst into richest bloom, fragrance filled the air, wondrous music was generally heard. After a time Maya leaves her palace and goes to the royal garden of Lumbuni, in a splendid chariot escorted by a thousand gods and warriors and waiting women. As she enters the garden shrubs and trees burst into bloom. She goes to a sala tree, the boughs of which bend down over her. While she stands admiring its bloom, Buddha is born, emerging miraculously from her side. He immediately takes seven steps toward the north, exclaiming: "This is my last birth. I am the greatest of beings!"

It might be possible to compare extravagances such as these with some of the records in the pseudo-graphic Gospels, but no one can sincerely compare them with the record in Matthew and Luke. But this is not the worst of the situation. These legendary stories are found in the *Lalita Vistara,* a book which was not put in written form until more than a century after the death of Buddha; of which nothing was definitely known until the year 300 A.D., some seven centuries after his death; and which even then is not included in the southern canon of Buddhist writings.

Let us run down this alleged parallel between our Gospels and the *Lalita,* and between the birth of Jesus and the birth of Buddha. Luke and Matthew both record the virgin birth of Jesus, and there is at least a substantial probability that Paul and John were both familiar with the facts. These records were all written from fifty to seventy years after the death and resurrection of our Lord, and some of them may have been written as early as twenty-five years after these events. The Buddhist records, on the contrary, are admittedly late; and there is no certainty that they were in written form until 300 A.D., seven hundred years after the death of Buddha. Again, Mary was an unmarried virgin. Maya was the wife of Suddhodana. Mary's virginity is explicitly pointed out; while it is equally explicit that Maya's marriage had been consummated. At the birth of Jesus, there is no prodigality of wonders; whereas, on the contrary at the birth of Buddha wonder succeeds wonder in useless and spectacular array. It must be evident to any candid mind that nothing but a violent prejudice against the New Testament record could possibly find a parallel to its sober account in the wild extravagances of Buddhist legends.

And now we come to the fourth discussion, namely, the value of the Christian record of our Lord's supernatural birth. In the first place, the account is substantially contemporary with the life of Jesus. It is a product of the first Christian generation. We do not, however, claim for it that it is a primary item of evidence supporting the deity of Jesus Christ. On the contrary, we readily admit that it is a record believable only when it stands against the background of Jesus' sinless life and triumph over death. Manifestly, it is not such a fact as would ordinarily form a part of Christian preaching. It was doubtless known and taught in the inner circles of

Christian communion, during the lifetime of Mary, but would certainly not have been spoken of generally in ordinary Christian preaching until after she had passed into the other world.

There is a considerable body of evidence to establish the fact that the virgin birth was an accepted item of Christian belief during the first century. Ignatius, who died about the year 110, was not only familiar with the idea, but he regarded it as generally accepted in the church of his day. Writing to the church at Ephesus as he made his journey to his martyrdom, he said: "For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God, conceived in the womb by Mary, of the seed of David, but by the Holy Ghost. He was born and baptized, that by his passion, he might purify the water. Now, the virginity of Mary was hidden from the princes of this world, as was also her offspring, and the death of the Lord, three mysteries of renown which were wrought in silence by God" (*Shorter Ignatian Epistles, Chapters* XVIII, XIX).

Again, the Apostles' Creed, which in its earliest form belongs, according to Kattenbusch, not later than the beginning of the second century and according to Seeberg, probably as early as the last part of the first century, contains the confession of the virgin birth of Jesus.

Luke's account of the beginning of the Christian Church ends suddenly with the record that Paul spent two years in his own hired house, failing to record his second imprisonment and final martyrdom, and this makes it almost certain that these events had not taken place when the book was written. If this inference be correct—and it is difficult to hold a contrary view—then the book of Acts was in writing not later than the years 65–66. The opening chapter of this book is explicit that his Gospel had already been written, so that if this date for the Acts be allowed to stand, the date for his Gospel is thrust back into the early 60's or even the late 50's.

Once more, the Gospel of Luke bears repeatedly clear evidence of its dependence upon the Gospel according to Matthew; and Luke explicitly says that "many have taken in hand to set forth in order a declaration of those things which are most surely believed among us." With the Acts written in the middle 60's and the Gospel in the late 50's or early

60's, the latest possible date for Matthew's Gospel would become the middle or late 50's. Here then, within twenty to twenty-five years of the death and resurrection of Jesus, the teaching as to his virgin birth is clearly established in the Christian Church.

If it should be suggested that the explanation of the abrupt ending of the book of Acts be Luke's intention of writing a third volume, which would have contained the apostle's later ministry and martyrdom, we make reply: In any event the book of Acts must have been written before the death of Paul, otherwise Luke would have known before he wrote the Acts that Paul's later experiences did not develop the material for such a further work. The fourth missionary journey, disclosed in the Pastoral Epistles, was largely a revisitation of churches already established. If this journey had ended, and Paul had been already the second time a prisoner and martyred when Luke wrote the Acts, he would have known the narrow compass of that later history, and would have added it on at the end of his second volume. It is quite unreasonable to suppose that he would have given a whole new volume to recording those few closing details.

How, then, shall we explain the rise of this account of the virgin birth of Jesus? It is too early to be legendary; what is its source? It is not a copy of current pagan hero stories, for those stories are markedly different from it. It is not a copy of the story of Buddha's birth, for here again there is no similarity; and, besides, the New Testament documents are earlier than the known earliest date of the Buddhist *Lalita*. It is not a story written into the Gospel record to make Jesus fulfill Old Testament prophecy, for the prophecies of Messiah's virgin birth in the Old Testament became clear in their meaning only after his life interpreted them; and before the fact, they must have been exceedingly unclear. There are two Old Testament prophecies that now seem to point forward to the virgin birth of Messiah: one is Isaiah 7. 14, "Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son"; the second is in Jeremiah 31. 22, "The Lord hath created a new thing in the earth. A woman shall compass a man." A third prophecy may be allowed, that in Genesis 3. 15, where it is said that the seed of the woman shall bruise the serpent's head. It will be immediately evident that this third prophecy could not possibly have suggested the story of the virgin birth. The same is true with respect to the other two. As we look back on Jeremiah's statement from our point of view, we recognize how perfectly the birth of Jesus fulfills it; but though we might not have been able to give any satisfying interpretation of the prophecy before his birth, nevertheless we certainly would not have found here a conception of virgin birth clear enough to cause the invention of the Gospel record. The situation is the same with respect to Isaiah 7. 14. The prophet's word is *"alma,"* which means a young unmarried woman of presumable virginity. The word explicitly affirming virginhood is *"bethula."* But even if *bethula* had been used, this prophecy would not have explained the Gospel record, for its Messianic reference was not recognized. Whence, then, the record? It could not have arisen in a Jewish ascetic prejudice against sex relation, for no such prejudice existed; and the Ebionites who were ascetic, far from inventing the virgin birth record, actually eliminated it from the tradition of Jesus as received among them.

And now what of the facts themselves? Does the record of Jesus' virgin birth assist our faith in him? There are some who would go so far as to assert that it not only assists our faith, but is actually necessary to the incarnation. We would not care to go so far. We would not like to undertake a statement of what may be God's necessities. It would seem to be possible that God might have caused his Son to become incarnate using the ordinary course of nature for the production of his human body and soul. God would have been under the necessity of interfering with nature's process, even so: for the human ego must have been excluded, else the incarnation would have displayed a dual self-consciousness: the self-consciousness of the humanly begotten son of Joseph and Mary and that of the eternal Son of God. It is quite without point to tamper with the Gospel record. The incarnation is by any method of accomplishing it a supernatural event; and the fact is there was both a divine appropriateness and a human necessity in the method God actually used. There was a divine appropriateness in it because it gave effective expression to the truth. Jesus is a *theanthropic* being, and his birth was a theanthropic event. He was conceived by the Holy Ghost and born of the Virgin Mary. There is a human necessity in it because apart from this peculiar circumstance it may be doubted whether men could have come to believe in the preexistence and deity of Jesus.

In addition, I believe the record of Jesus' virgin birth makes a distinct contribution to Christian evidences. The resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead towers in history like the walls of a massive cathedral. The record of his virgin birth stands against these walls, as buttresses. It presupposes them, but standing in relation to them, it strengthens them. Having seen the glory of Christ's resurrection, and felt the mastery of his life, we find the whole truth about him becoming luminous, when at the beginning of the record we discover the history of his birth. As James Orr has pointed out in his discussion of this subject, belief in the true deity of Jesus Christ always stands in association with his miraculous conception; whereas the denial of his supernatural birth historically works out in the denial of his deity.

And now, finally, there would seem to be five reasons why Christians should ever guard their faith in this great affirmation. First, because it is a part of the New Testament record, and the credibility of that record requires the recognition of its truth. Second, it is divinely appropriate, correctly expressing the deepest truth of Christ's nature, who, while he was truly human, was yet also something sublimely more. Third, it is humanly necessary to faith, its denial tending constantly to become also a denial of the incarnation. Fourth, it is an important secondary evidence to the glory of Christ's person. Fifth, its denial is arbitrary and without intellectual warrant. It has no support in science, for science cannot discuss the incarnation, there being no possibility of developing an inductive study of an event which took place but once in human history. This negative point of view, again, has no support in history. The New Testament documents unanimously sustain the testimony to the virgin birth of Jesus, and it is by no means certain that both Paul and John were not thoroughly familiar with this item of belief. Contemporary history offers no parallel to the record, nor does the mythology of Buddha. The fact is, scholarship has no basis whatsoever for its current negative attitude toward the virgin birth save in its prejudice against the supernatural. If its exponents were clear thinkers, they would recognize this and admit it. But the situation is even worse for philosophical opposition to the supernatural; if it is thoroughgoing enough to exclude miracles, it must exclude also every force that is transcendent to nature's closed system. That is to say, the denial of the supernatural as a philosophical impossibility excludes also personality. Human life becomes a mere complex intellectual mechanism, morality becomes illusion, and truth becomes blind, meaningless fate. We are back again to a principle that is of the utmost importance to all investigations—the principle that truth belongs to personality; that men must face all ultimate questions of reality as moral beings, choosing what they will hold and what they will deny. The issue, then, between naturalism and supernaturalism is thus ultimately a choice. It is not a question of science. It is not a question of history. It is not a question of scholarship. It is a question of faith where men have chosen to believe, and men have chosen to disbelieve. Those who have chosen to believe see all values in the light of their faith, which is their fundamental venture. Those who have chosen to disbelieve see similarly by the light which they have chosen. This is the cleavage. It is fundamental and unavoidable.

CHAPTER V

"CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED"

"Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead and buried."

"And when Jesus had cried with a loud voice, he said, Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost."—*Luke 23. 46.*

"For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him."—*2 Corinthians 5. 21.*

CHAPTER V

"CRUCIFIED, DEAD AND BURIED"

Life is full of sublimities, but there is nowhere such a concentration of them as are gathered about Mount Calvary. Here is made manifest the very living God, the creator of the universe; and man made in his image, the image of his moral freedom, his causal responsibility, his creatorhood; and Righteousness, the law that binds individuals into noble unities, and makes life divine because of its sublime relationships. Here is made manifest Judgment, the outcry of holiness against sin; and Love, which holds true to brotherhood in spite of judgment; and Self sacrifice, God taking death up into his own infinite life, vicariously, in redeeming love; and Resurrection, which means judgment satisfied, death emptied, love triumphant. All this is here crowding Calvary's low summit with the utmost majesty of the thought and feeling and purpose of the Infinite.

O Calvary! thy shrouded skies are blinding light.
Archangels, who have gazed upon the eternal
throne,

Approaching thee, avert their eyes in reverent awe;
The very dead, sensing in thee new sweeps of truth,
Must quickened be to darker depths of shame, or else
Elate with wondering gratitude leap forth to life;
And even Hell, beholding thee afar, must shrink
Within itself, to hide its conscious vanity—
The awful uselessness and emptiness of sin.

The death of Jesus Christ is a central emphasis in the writings of the evangelists. This is one of the striking facts about their accounts. Mark, for example, records comparatively little of the teaching of Jesus; but his account of Jesus' expectation of death and of his dying is full. It cannot be denied either that the death of Jesus was their chief single emphasis, or that they understood this emphasis to be absolutely true to the Saviour's own. His death for sin was the chief accomplishment of his incarnate life. When once his resurrection had made clear to them his deity, the wonder of all wonders inevitably became the fact that he, the Son of God, had died for human sin.

A catalogue of the references to the death of Jesus in the Gospels, chronologically arranged, is immediately suggestive. If we include the prophetic announcements of John the Baptist, there are twenty-eight of these: four during the first year of his public life, three during the second, and twenty-one during the third, the period of his semi-retirement, when he was facing up to the Passion.

REFERENCES DURING THE FIRST YEAR

John 1.29. The Baptist publicly testifies to Jesus: "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."

John 1.36. The Baptist privately testifies to Jesus, saying to two of his disciples: "Behold the Lamb of God!"

John 2.19. Then Jesus makes a veiled reference to his cross, when asked for a sign, saying: "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." It is important to compare this word of Jesus with the testimony of his enemies as quoted against him in Matthew 26.61 and Acts 6.14.

John 3.14. A little later Jesus makes a second veiled reference to his cross during his conversation with Nicodemus: "And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life."

REFERENCES DURING THE SECOND YEAR

Mark 2.19-20. Next Jesus answers the question why his disciples do not fast, saying, "But the days will come when the bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days."

Matthew 12.38-40. In the mid-Galilæan period Jesus is accused by the Pharisees of casting out demons by the power of the devil. He replies to them, and afterward they ask of him a sign. He answers: "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the prophet Jonas: for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth."

John 6.32-58. Jesus delivers a long discourse upon himself as the true heavenly manna after the feeding of the five thousand during the Passover of the year 29.

It is important to notice that the bridegroom passage establishes Jesus' early realization of his sacrificial death. Mark records it almost at the beginning of Jesus' Galilæan ministry; Matthew in 9. 14, shortly after the Sermon on the Mount; Luke in 5. 33, after the healing of the paralytic, who was let down through the roof into his presence. It is perfectly evident that Jesus never looked forward to a successful teaching ministry that would accomplish the establishment in Palestine of a spiritual society. The introduction of this element into Jesus' thought is entirely arbitrary and imaginative. The bridegroom passage in the synoptists makes certain the early date of Jesus' redemptive point of view, and certifies the earlier veiled references recorded in the fourth Gospel as historically probable.

REFERENCES DURING THE THIRD YEAR

From Passover season until shortly before the time of the Feast of Tabernacles, in the fall of 29, we have no record of Jesus' activity save the one incident of the Syrophœnician woman. After these weeks of retirement and communion with the Twelve Jesus came back into Galilee, and immediately we have a veiled reference to his cross, as follows:

Matthew 16. 1-4. The Pharisees and Sadducees desire of Jesus a sign from heaven, and he replies, "An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given to it but the sign of the prophet Jonas."

Matthew 16. 21. The second prophecy of his cross during the third year of his public ministry is Jesus' first explicit reference to it. This follows immediately after the formal confession of his divine glory by Peter at Cæsarea Philippi. The synoptists all three tell us that from here on the emphasis was constant. Matthew's record reads, "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day."

Luke 9. 31. We have next the record that, during the transfiguration of Jesus, he conversed with Moses and Elias concerning his decease, which he should accomplish at Jerusalem.

Matthew 17. 9-12. Following this we have the record that, after the revelation of Jesus' glory in the transfiguration, he discoursed with his disciples concerning the fact of his approaching death; and Mark 9. 9 agrees.

Matthew 17. 22-23. Then, while Jesus still lingers in Galilee there is another account of his renewed emphasis upon his approaching death. He said: "The Son of man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and the third day he shall be raised again." Mark 9. 30-32 carries the same.

John 8. 21-29. After this we have the words spoken by Jesus at the Feast of Tabernacles, in the fall of the year 29. Their background is the fact of his approaching death. In verse 28 he makes explicit reference to it, saying, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that I am he."

Luke 13. 31-35. Next Jesus is warned that Herod will kill him. He replies, "Behold, I cast out devils, and I do cures to-day and to-morrow, and the third day I shall be perfected." He continues by announcing that death awaits him at Jerusalem, and concludes with his lament over the Holy City.

John 10. 11. Then during the Feast of Dedication, at Jerusalem, Jesus says, "I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep."

John 10. 17-18. Later in the same discourse he says: "Therefore doth my Father love me, because I lay down my life, that I might take it again. No man taketh it from me; but I lay it down of myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. This commandment have I received of my Father."

Luke 17. 24-25. Somewhat after this Jesus was discoursing upon the question of his return, and he said: "But first must he suffer many things, and be rejected of this generation."

Matthew 20. 17-19. Then as he makes his final journey to Jerusalem he says: "Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of man shall be betrayed unto the chief priests and unto the scribes, and they shall condemn him to death, and they shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock and to scourge, and to crucify him; and the third day he shall rise again."

Matthew 20. 20-28. Shortly after this prophecy on the Jerusalem road, James and John ask for the seats at the right and left hand in his kingdom; and Jesus, replying to their false ambition, concludes with the great ransom saying, "The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Matthew 26. 12. Jesus uttered a prophecy of his death after he was anointed by Mary at Bethany. He said, "For in that she hath poured this ointment on my body, she did it for my burial."

John 12. 20-33. A prophecy of Jesus' death was called forth by the desire of certain Greeks to see him. He compares his sacrificial suffering to the corn of wheat falling into the ground and dying, and concludes with the great sentence, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me."

Matthew 21. 33-45. There is a prophecy of his death in the parable of the wicked husbandmen.

Matthew 26. 24. Jesus again foreannounced his death in connection with the prophecy of his betrayal, saying, "The Son of man goeth as it is written of him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of man is betrayed! It had been good for that man if he had not been born."

Matthew 26. 26-28. At the institution of the Supper, Jesus takes bread and breaks it, and wine and pours it out, saying: "Take, eat; this is my body," and "Drink ye all of it; for this is my blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."

Matthew 26. 31. Afterward he announces his resurrection, which, of course, presupposes his death, saying: "All ye shall be offended because of me this night; for it is written, I will smite the shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad. But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee."

Matthew 26. 38. Then at the threshold of Gethsemane he says: "My soul is exceeding sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with me." Following this comes his thrice-repeated prayer—his humble reaching into the will of God in respect of his sacrificial suffering.

Matthew 26. 45. Next he speaks of the appointed hour for his suffering as having come, saying, "Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners."

Matthew 26. 51-54. Then Peter resists Jesus' arrest with drawn sword, and he says, "Thinkest thou that I cannot now pray to my Father, and he shall presently give me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be?"

REFERENCES AFTER THE RESURRECTION

Luke 24. 6-7. After the resurrection an

angel at the open tomb of Jesus spoke of his death as divinely ordained, saying: "He is not here, but is risen: remember how he spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."

Luke 24. 26. Then Jesus interprets his cross to the two on their way to Emmaus on Easter evening. He said, "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into his glory? And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself."

Luke 24. 46. Finally, in the upper room on the first Easter evening after he has demonstrated to the Eleven his tangible presence, he points out to them that his suffering and resurrection were foretold in Scripture and concludes, saying, "Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day: and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem."

It is important to notice that all Jesus' commissionings of his followers to be witnesses of him include an emphasis both upon his resurrection and also upon his death. This is true of those which precede his cross as well as of those which follow it. For example, John 15. 27: "And ye also shall bear witness, because ye have been with me from the beginning." Acts 1. 8: "And ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in Judæa, and in Samaria and unto the uttermost part of the earth." Every record, also, of his postresurrection conversations with the Eleven concerning the forgiveness of sin has as its background a recognition of his redemptive death. This is true of the Great Commission in Matthew 28. 19-20, and of the striking word in John 20. 23, where Jesus says, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost: whosesoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosesoever sins ye retain, they are retained."

Three things are immediately clear: First, that Jesus from the beginning of his public ministry looked forward to a violent death. Second, that he regarded this death as a divinely purposed suffering. Third, that he regarded it as redemptive. It is interesting to notice that no less than fifteen of Jesus' references to his death carry the thought of divine intention. He sees himself fulfilling the types of Moses' brazen serpent, of Jonah, and of the manna. His death is ordained, it is foretold in Scripture, it was a divinely fixed hour toward which he moved. He accomplished it. It was the purpose for which he came. He uses the Greek impersonal verb δει (*dei*) with reference to it six times in Luke's Gospel. This verb has the force of fate, divine purpose, ordaining. No one who has respect for the New Testament accounts as reliable history can possibly deny that from the beginning Jesus saw his death as the great undertaking of his incarnation. With fixed devotion he moved on to accomplish it. There is no other point of view from which it is possible to organize a philosophy of his life that will be true to all the facts. The suggestion that he first hoped to build a spiritual society in Galilee by means of a teaching ministry, and that he afterward turned from this to go up to Jerusalem fearing rather than understanding the prospect of death that he foresaw awaiting him there—this is not history. It is not scholarship. It is nothing but fiction. It has no other support than the imagination of men who have become imbued with an evolutionary philosophy, and who are capable of committing any measure of violence to their sources for the sake of their doctrinaire position.

The best answer to such an arbitrary reconstruction of Jesus' life is a statement of its philosophy as this is presented in the Gospels. Jesus came with a fourfold purpose: He came to fulfill the law and the prophets (Matthew 5.17). That is, he came both to make them full, to complete them, and also to realize them in himself. This was his first purpose.

His second purpose was to manifest in life and word and work the glory of his own being in order that his majesty, his grace, his Deity might come at last to be understood by men. This purpose of the Saviour is expressed repeatedly both in the synoptics and in the fourth Gospel. Notice in the synoptics his proof that he has authority to forgive sin in the healing of the palsied man (Mark 2.10ff.); or his appeal to his mighty works when the messengers come from John Baptist (Luke 7.22ff.); or his criticism of the blindness of the cities in which his miracles had been wrought (Matthew 11.21ff.). Notice in the fourth Gospel his eagerness that the Twelve should believe in his divine glory as this is again and again expressed on the last night before he suffered. Notice his appeal: "Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me . . . Believe me that I am in the Father, and the Father in me: or else believe in me for the very works' sake." These words require no interpretation. Jesus felt his life and work had made him manifest, and he appealed to men to recognize him. The same eagerness is manifest also in his incomparable prayer, where he prays "that the world may believe that thou hast sent me . . . And that the world may know that thou hast sent me, and hast loved them, as thou hast loved me." There is very much of this material in the fourth Gospel.

There is in the synoptics one other incident that is especially important in this connection. Jesus had asked the Twelve, whom men said that he was; and then, immediately afterward, whom they understood him to be. Peter answered; and Jesus responded with a shout: "Blessed art thou, Simon . . . Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." The critical attitude toward this text is not important. We note the fact that there is no documentary reason to doubt its integrity; but the value we are interested in is independent of that whole discussion. Jesus' question alone, even without Peter's answer, makes it perfectly clear how eager he was that his glory should be manifest, and that this inner group should recognize him. Jesus' second purpose then was to manifest his own eternal divine glory.

Third, he came to die redemptively for human sin.

Fourth, he came, having died, to rise again, that in his name forgiveness of sin should be preached among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

It will be noticed that this statement does not contain any recognition of Jesus' purpose to reveal to men the Father; and the question will be instant, Why the omission? The answer is almost startling. There does not seem to be any New Testament authority for the statement that to reveal the Father was a part of Jesus' purpose during his incarnate presence. He does claim that he alone knows the Father, and that he alone can reveal him. On the last night of his earthly life Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and it sufficeth us," and Jesus replied, "He that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Show us the Father?" But there does not seem to be any authority for the statement that Jesus came to reveal the Father to men. There would seem to be three conclusions: First, that Jesus is not careful that men should distinguish between himself and the Infinite Father, from whom he came. Second, that Jesus' eagerness is for men to behold his glory and identify him as God the Son. Third, that the vision of the Father, in the eternal glory of his being, is a sublimity that awaits us at the consummation of life. Jesus has revealed God's character and power. There are other revelations of him which can be received by the pure in heart. There are still others that can be received only by transfigured souls; but the need of sinful men is not to see the Father; it is to see Jesus, who is God, the incarnate Son.

If we accept this fourfold purpose as the divine meaning in the incarnation, the philosophy of Jesus' life stands clear. His ethical teachings were not his gospel; they were instead his making full of the law. His healing miracles were not an effort to meet the total physical pain and need of men; they were instead one avenue by which his divine glory was coming through to expression, both in its almightiness and in its goodness. When the fact of his glory had been effectively manifested, both in its moral quality and its power, he was no longer largely interested in healing works. So at times he sought both to avoid them and to keep those which he wrought secret.

After that stupendous series of miracles at the close of his Galilæan activity he suddenly withdraws into semiprivacy, journeying with the Twelve into the neighborhood of Tyre. Why does he do this? It is quite unexplainable if his purpose in life had been to establish a spiritual kingdom in Palestine through his teaching and healing ministry. But, on the basis of the fourfold purpose we have set forth, his intention is clear. As Matthew and John both tell us, his disciples had made a tremendous discovery concerning him at that Passover season. According to the first they had said, "Of a truth thou art the Son of God" (Matthew 14. 33). According to the second, they had said, "We believe and are sure that thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God" (John 6. 69). These confessions meant that the inner group of his followers, with whom he was dealing chiefly, had in a large way begun to grasp the mystery and glory of his person: consequently, he withdraws with them apart, that he may commune with them and let the truth they had glimpsed more fully possess them. Immediately after this period of communion comes his question, "Whom say ye that I am?" and then following hard upon their answer is the transfiguration. How clear it is! Jesus could not tell the Twelve that he was God. He had to wait for them to glimpse it, to see it, to confess it. After this immediately the veil is parted and his eternal glory shines through. There were splendors and voices; and out of the midst of the vision the shadow, nay, the brightness of the cross is seen.

From this time Jesus sets his face to go up to Jerusalem to die. He does not go there in bewilderment, dimly guessing that since there was no other way, Jerusalem with its probable cross must be the will of God. No, he knows that Jerusalem means death. He goes to die. The Twelve are bewildered. They hang back; but Jesus goes before with set face. It was for this he had come into the world. He had come "not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many." And so he plans his final summons to Israel. He sends out the Seventy. He performs his most stupendous miracle—the raising of

Lazarus after he had been dead four days. He fulfills the prophecy of Zechariah, riding on the poor man's ass, instead of on the royal mule, in lowly pomp into the Holy City. He sits in the midst of the people's ringing Messianic acclaim—"Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord." In the Temple he judges sin that has become a God-profaning institution. In the same place he once more manifests his power and grace by healing the multitudes. He goes to Gethsemane as to a trysting place to meet Judas and the soldiers; and there he yields himself to die.

Once more he manifests his majesty, overwhelming the soldiers with the wonder of his matchless manhood. Once more he manifests his grace, healing the ear of Malchus, the high priest's servant; and then he suffers himself to be bound. They strike him and he is silent. They spit upon him and he holds his peace. They ask him of his person, and he confesses his glory, saying: "Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26. 64).

They lead him from judgment to scourging.

They lash him with knotted whips until his blood drips and his flesh flies. The soldiers deck him in the mockery of royalty, and laugh at his silent pain. Pilate points at him in pity—"Behold the man," he says. They lay upon his bleeding flesh the cross, and he, trembling in human weakness, staggers under it out toward Calvary—and yet he is God the omnipotent Son; God who made the worlds. Oh, mystery of mysteries! The Infinite has emptied himself. He has put aside his eternal glory. He has hidden himself in the limitations of our manhood, that he might take upon himself also the judgment of our death.

Out yonder upon Golgotha the deed was done. They stripped him of his clothes. They nailed him to the tree. They stood about him with coarse voices and wagging heads mocking his suffering. He answered.

Seven times He spoke. Seven words of love!
    And all his words together cry
  For mercy on the souls of men
    Who him deride and crucify.

"Father, forgive," he patient prays.
    "Blinded, they know not what they do.
  Heedless of truth, careless of right,
    Proudly they vanity pursue."

Again he speaks. A man of sin,
A guilty robber to him cries.
His word is grace beyond degree:
"To-day, with me in Paradise."

To Mary, weeping at his feet,
"Woman, behold thy son," he says;
And when strange darkness shrouds the hill,
In desolation drear he prays.

Man's deeps of sin are on his soul;
Man's guilt has made him lone, bereft;
The Father's face is from him hid;
"Forsaken—why?" He cries in death.

"I thirst," he sighs with fevered voice;
At length he feels man's mortal woe;
Blood drips his brow, his feet, his hands—
His grief, what mind can ever know?

"'Tis finished," loud the Sufferer cries;
He lifts his burning eyes to heaven;
"Father, to thee my soul I yield,"
He says, and droops. His life is given.

This is the New Testament fact of the death of Jesus. This is the truth that is enshrined in the Christian creeds. To deny this fact, or to explain it otherwise than as Jesus and the apostles have described it is to destroy the Christian faith, and to make of the death of

Jesus the most unhappy mistake, the most depressing tragedy of all history. If Jesus did not go to Jerusalem to die redemptively, he ought not to have gone there. One can understand Socrates in weary age refusing to seek life by exile; but one cannot understand a man at thirty-three, who believed in the possibility of saving the world by ethical exhortations and by the power of his example, deliberately walking into useless danger.

Galilee was at least partly friendly. Jerusalem was known to be bitter, hypocritical, hating. What possible gain could there have been in going there? Jesus' truths were not yet in writing. He could have attended to preserving them. There was much that the Twelve did not understand. He could have instructed them. What took him to Jerusalem? It was not the hope that his message would win there, having failed in Galilee. And what reason to conclude that already it had failed? Jesus' Galilæan ministry was too young to have failed. He had no human reason for discouragement.

No, it is impossible to work out a philosophy of Jesus' life on this basis. If he did not go to Jerusalem to die redemptively, it would have been better judgment for him to remain in Galilee, and to attend to the work begun there. If we assume him to have believed in the efficacy of a teaching ministry to save the world, the Jerusalem journey was a vain idea that reflects no credit upon his judgment. It was leaving a field that had possibilities, and where a start had been made, to go to one that had none. It involved the risk of trusting the codification and preservation of his teachings to others, a work which, under the assumed circumstances, he could have done so much better, and should have done himself.

How absurd! The Gospels say Jesus went to Jerusalem to die redemptively. The expectation of this event appears in them at the beginning. It fills them at the close. This death was foretold in Scripture, it was ordained of God. It fills all his later thought. It was his master passion. If the Gospels be not trustworthy in such a record, they can be trustworthy in nothing, and all discussion becomes vain. This is the one barren alternative open to those who deny the plain teaching of Scripture and substitute the Sermon on the Mount for the gospel of the cross and the resurrection; the religion of Jesus for the religion about him.

We turn away from such empty and unfounded imaginings back to the New Testament and to the creeds. Christ did not write his teachings, because it is himself rather than his principles that is creative. His truth is just a fragment of the total glory of his person. It is his person that is saving. The creed is right. What humanity needs is not a revised edition of the Decalogue, but a vision of Jesus, that we may commit ourselves wholly to him. So the creed cries:

I believe in Jesus, God the Son, the Creator;

Incarnate by the Holy Spirit of Mary the virgin;

A member of man's ruined race;

Dying for sin, crucified, pierced, buried;

Risen, ascended, reigning, the organizing center of a new humanity which has its unity forever in him—This is what we believe. It is in this, in him, alone we hope.

"We would see Jesus: this is all we're needing;
Strength, joy, and willingness come with the sight;
We would see Jesus, dying, risen, pleading;
Then welcome day, and farewell mortal night."

CHAPTER VI

“THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD”

"The third day he rose from the dead."

"And if the Messiah rose not, your faith is inane; and ye are yet in your sins."—*1 Corinthians 15. 17* (Murdock's translation of the Syriac).

CHAPTER VI

"THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD"

As with the virgin birth, so also with the resurrection of Jesus. It is a body of intellectual fact before it is a body of devotional faith. No presentation of the resurrection to-day is complete that does not contain also a statement of its evidences. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is the corner stone of the Christian religion. As Paul said, "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain" (1 Corinthians 15.14). A translation of the Syriac renders this word "vain" by the English "inane." What a vivid putting of the truth! "If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching inane, and your faith is also inane."

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is one of the best-evidenced facts in history. We cannot attempt here a complete statement of its evidences. Our plan is to present a rapid synopsis of the main outline of the argument, so that the whole field will be brought quickly before the mind. There are eight principal values. We will present them in order.

First. It is perfectly certain that the record of Jesus' appearances as preserved in the New Testament is the primitive Christian witness. It was not later than the year 55 when Paul addressed to the church at Corinth his first letter, which contains in its fifteenth chapter a synopsis of the evidences of the resurrection as he was familiar with them. That synopsis agrees substantially with the Gospel account of the resurrection appearances of Jesus. Paul notices that "he was seen of Cephas; then of the twelve; after that of above five hundred brethren at once, of whom the greater part remain unto this present, though some are fallen asleep. After that he was seen of James; then of all the apostles." Turning now to the Gospels, we find that the first significant appearance of Jesus was to Peter, the leader of the apostolic group. The second appearance to the apostolic group was to the ten of them together, Thomas being absent. This would correspond to the second appearance noticed by Paul. The third appearance noted by Paul was to a large and important gathering—the five hundred brethren at once. This was doubtless the Galilæan appearance referred to by Matthew. Paul then noted an appearance to James of which we have no other information. He concluded with an appearance to a second large group which he calls all the apostles as distinct from the Twelve. This would correspond with the final appearance noted in Luke when Jesus led his disciples from Jerusalem to Bethany, and ascended. Luke tells us that the group in Jerusalem at this time numbered one hundred and twenty—a company which we could easily recognize as the equivalent of Paul's "all the apostles."

This synopsis omits several appearances, but the omissions are quite natural. The first two to be omitted are appearances to the women. It will be readily admitted that such appearances would be less significant than those to members of the apostolic group. The next to be omitted is that to the two on their way to Emmaus, recorded by Luke. This beautiful manifestation of the risen Jesus is of capital evidential value; but even so it is of so much less value than Jesus' manifestations to the official apostolic group, that one can easily see how it would be omitted in a brief synopsis of evidences. The fourth omitted appearance was that to the Twelve on the eighth day. It is a substantial reproduction of the earlier appearance on Easter evening, the only difference being that Thomas was present on this occasion. When two manifestations are so nearly identical, it is to be expected that one would be omitted from a hurried synopsis of evidence. The last appearance omitted by Paul is that to Peter and the six friends on the shore of Lake Galilee. If we think of this as introductory to the later appearance to the five-hundred brethren at once, which we might describe as the great official manifestation of Jesus to his disciples, we can easily understand how the introductory event could be omitted.

The important thing is that Paul's brief synopsis contains the same evidential data as the synoptic accounts. Therefore in the Gospel accounts we are evidently in touch with the primitive Christian testimony to the resurrection of Jesus.

Second. It is certain that the sepulcher of Jesus Christ was open and empty on Easter morning. It would have been quite impossible for the gospel of the empty sepulcher and the risen, triumphant Christ to develop against any other background than that of the well-known fact that his sepulcher was open and empty. The Jewish Sanhedrin would not have had recourse to persecution in their effort to silence the apostolic witness if the sealed sepulcher and the dead body of Jesus had been available. If the sepulcher of Jesus had been sealed, and his body in it on the day of Pentecost, not only would it have been impossible for three thousand men to believe the message of his resurrection, but the visitors from all over the Roman world, returning to their homes, and carrying with them the message of the sealed tomb, would have made the gospel unpreachable everywhere. That things did not develop thus, and that the Sanhedrin did make use of the scourge against the apostolic witness, instead of using what would have been the more compelling force of the sealed tomb, demonstrates that the sepulcher of Jesus was open and empty, as the disciples affirmed. In considering the compelling force of these facts, we need to remember also that the city of Jerusalem was less than a mile from east to west or from north to south, and that the sepulcher of Jesus was, therefore, most accessible to the entire population of the capital.

Third. It is equally beyond denial that something most extraordinary did happen to *change the despair of the apostolic group on Friday night into the exaltation of their Easter confidence.* On Friday night, the apostles regarded Jesus and his cause as a failure. Every hope of their hearts, religious and patriotic, had gone down into defeat with his death. Their state of mind would have made leadership impossible. Theirs was a shrinking despair, not a triumphant confidence. Every contact that Luke has preserved of their state of mind on that first Easter day, before they knew of the resurrection, is one of extreme depression. Something must have happened, and something most extraordinary, to change this depression into their confident and victorious bearing. Before it happened, Jesus was to them a ruined hope, a dead leader. After it happened, Jesus was not only Messiah, but more than Messiah. He was their sin-and-death-conquering Saviour, in whom they believed their own victory was guaranteed. This violent change in their point of view is an historic fact, and it demands an historic explanation. Those who deny the explanation offered by the apostles themselves are under the burden of providing a reasonable substitute.

Fourth. The sincerity of the first Chris-

tians is so certified by their death-defying devotion to Jesus Christ and their triumphant joy in him that it cannot be questioned. It is unthinkable that the first apostles would have given their lives in sacrificial devotion to the teaching of a message which they knew to be untrue. But this is not the whole of the problem involved in a denial of their sincerity. The apostles were not only martyrs—they were joyful in the midst of their martyrdom. They died with a shout, and the explanation of their shout was their conviction concerning Jesus and the meaning of his life for them. It is difficult indeed to conceive that men could die for a lie; but it is insanity to suggest that men could die in triumphant gladness for that which they knew was not the truth. The charge of insincerity against the apostolic witness is simply an absurdity. Their testimony to the resurrection of Jesus fulfills Hume's demand as to the type of evidence that could establish belief in a supernatural fact. It is easier to believe in the reality of the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus than it would be to believe in the dishonesty of the apostolic group.

Fifth. Their testimony as recorded in the Gospels is in such fullness of detail and in *such exactness of form that it immediately suggests a responsible witness as distinct from tradition and irresponsible gossip.* In considering the New Testament witness for the resurrection of Jesus, we should give careful attention to the fact of its fullness of detail. For example, in Luke 24. 34 we have the record, "The Lord is risen indeed, and hath appeared to Simon," and in Matthew 27. 52 we have the record, "And the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after his resurrection, and went into the holy city, and appeared unto many." Had the record of the resurrection of Jesus generally been in the vague, indefinite form that characterizes these two items, it would not have been evidence. But it is not in such a vague and indefinite form. On the contrary, it is everywhere in definite and complete detail. Take for example, the appearance of Jesus to Mary Magdalene. We know the time—"Early in the morning, before it was yet light." We know the place—"at the sepulcher." We know her state of mind when first she saw him and mistook him for the gardener. We know the words that he spoke that transfixed her heart with wonder. We know what she did and said, and what he said in response to her adoring cry. It is all there in full detail. It is the same in nearly every other instance. The appearance to Cleopas and his friend on the way to Emmaus is in even fuller detail. The appearance in the upper room on the first Sunday night preserves such minute circumstances as that Jesus ate fish and an honeycomb. The appearance in the same room a week later presents with power the detail of Jesus' conversation with Thomas. The appearance on the shore of Lake Galilee is exceedingly rich in evidential detail. The important appearance of Jesus to the whole group of his followers in Galilee is not as full as we could wish; it does, however, tell us the most important thing, namely, the commission Jesus gave to his disciples upon that occasion. The last appearance of Jesus, that connected with his ascension, is also fully given. We know that he walked with them from Jerusalem as far as Bethany. We know what they talked about, and how he answered them. We know about his promise of the Holy Ghost, and his instructions that they should wait until the promise had been made full. We have the picture of the disciples standing, gazing into heaven, looking after the trail of the ascending Lord, and then of the sudden manifestation of angels, and the promise of his return. It is all definite and explicit; explicit as to time and place and circumstance. It is notably different from those two instances referred to where the Gospel tradition preserves but an indefinite statement.

It might be well to add a little synopsis of the apostolic authority connected with each appearance of Jesus. The first appearance, that to Mary Magdalene, is recorded in John, and is noted in one of the endings of Mark. The second appearance, that to the group of women, is noted by Matthew alone. The third appearance, that to Peter, is recorded by Luke and Paul. The fourth appearance, that to the two on the way to Emmaus, is recorded in Luke and is noted also in the familiar Markan ending. The appearance in the upper room on the first Easter evening is noted by Luke, John and Paul. The sixth appearance, on the eighth day in the upper room, is noted by John alone. The appearance by the side of Lake Galilee is noted by John also. The official appearance of Jesus to the whole group of his followers is noted by Matthew and Paul. The ninth appearance, that to his brother James, is noted by Paul alone. The tenth and final appearance, that of the ascension, is noted by Luke, both in the Gospel and in the Acts, and is probably referred to also in Paul.

Sixth. The testimony to the resurrection of Jesus is the fitting conclusion to the testimony of his life which is everywhere supernatural and transcendent. The portrait of Jesus is supernatural from end to end. The resurrection is its fitting climax. Jesus is everywhere supernatural. He is supernatural in his ethical supremacy. He is supernatural in his unique God-consciousness. He is supernatural also in his equally unique self-consciousness. It is impossible to get the miraculous out of the record of his life. The record of his triumph over death is only a fitting conclusion to the whole.

Seventh. The portrait of Jesus, in all its transcendent power, precisely fulfills the aspirations of the human heart. Through all the ages of man's history he has been longing for just such a transcendence as was made manifest in Jesus and his resurrection from the dead. This fact that Jesus Christ does in every respect fulfill the aspirations of the human soul is one of the most remarkable truths about him. No imagination of the greatest literary genius could possibly improve upon the simplicity and majesty of the accounts of the evangelists. He satisfies the souls of men, and his portrait in the Gospels has satisfied men now for two thousand years. If the unanswered longing of all the ages, if the disappointed fears of all the years could somehow come into expression through the mind of a master-writer, the answer to that expression of longing would be the portrait of Jesus. How utterly unthinkable it is that idle stories, told and retold, modified and exaggerated, could at least have become this master portrait of the Son of God, which no human genius of the ages could ever have produced. No, it is not true. The New Testament records stand. They are history, and they are certified as true by their very perfectness. The current naturalistic criticism that is arrayed against them is but a passing current in philosophy.

Eighth. Wherever the hearts of men, responding to these facts, have attained to a self-intrusting faith in Jesus Christ, there has resulted a transformation of the heart that has remotivated life and changed history. The power of Pentecost in history is a fact as big and bold as gravitation. One can as easily deny the stars as to deny the transforming influence of the preaching of the gospel of Jesus Christ all down the ages. When Peter and James and John began to preach Jesus and the resurrection, the pagan world was in the grip of an all-encompassing tyranny, and even its ideals were corrupted with egoism. Women were in tutelage; children were without rights; infants and aged were exposed for death; war for plunder was an accepted institution; the spectacle of man murdering man was the most exciting pastime of the people. Institutions of mercy were unknown. There were no hospitals, no orphanages, no asylums. The law of life was the right of might, and woe be to the weak in the world of paganism. Jesus changed all this, and the leaven of his influence still grows. This is the fact of Pentecost, outwardly. Inwardly, Pentecost is a sublime certainty; a consciousness of unity with God and Christ; a certainty of God and immortality that kindles one’s whole being, and energizes all life with love. The fact that these results flow out of faith in Jesus Christ, his cross and his resurrection is a powerful argument for their truth. It is unthinkable that the sublimest consequences of all history should be the results either of a misconception or a lie. What a tragedy it is that the historical and spiritual certainty of Jesus is so constantly challenged to-day, while other ideas that are not supported by the hundredth part of his evidences and that are without value to men, or may even be a detriment to them, are accepted as proven certainties!

CHAPTER VII

"THE HOLY SPIRIT"

"I believe in the Holy Spirit."

"And I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter, that he may abide with you for ever; even the Spirit of truth; whom the world cannot receive, because it seeth him not, neither knoweth him: but ye know him; for he dwelleth with you, and shall be in you."

—*John 14. 16.*

CHAPTER VII

"THE HOLY SPIRIT"

THE word "Ghost" in the Authorized Version means "spirit," "breath." The promise of Jesus is of a Spirit-imparted urge within man's consciousness; an immediate certainty of truth. It is because he imparts this inner certainty that the Holy Ghost is called the Comforter, the Helper. He makes God, righteousness, eternity, Christ real, convincing, within the human soul. He is the discoverer, the liberator of man's best self. He enlarges our outlook upon life. He is in literal fact both the Spirit of Truth and the Blessed Comforter, whom the enthroned Jesus sends to us from the Father.

THE HOLY GHOST PERSONAL

In experience he is not personally disclosed. We know the Spirit only as the illuminator of our souls, the revealer of Jesus; nevertheless, our Lord speaks of him as a Person. He is another helper, one like Jesus, yet different from him.

Paul understood Jesus to have taught the personality of the Holy Spirit, and so he speaks of him as one who feels, who is grieved when he is slighted, who prays within believers in their praying, moving them to groaning desires that cannot be expressed in words.

The Creeds also confess him as a Person, standing him beside the other two of the great Trinity:

"I believe in God the Father Almighty. . . ."

"I believe in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord. . . ."

"I believe in the Holy Ghost," the Lord, the Giver of life, proceeding from the Father and the Son.

THE HIDDEN SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is, then, a divine Personality unrevealed. He is the unrevealed Revealer of God. He is the unseen Helper of men; the silent Partner of all our victories; the undisclosed Power behind all our spiritual achievements.

There is something sublime about this ceaseless creative toil of the hidden spirit. The universe about us abounds in expressions of his self-effaced ministry. Thus there are roots of the plant, without which the plant could not live for a moment, that are always hidden away in the soil, ever unseen, but ever toiling. They seem to have no part in the glory of the plant's life. They are down in the dark, but they are nevertheless a necessary part of its effective life. And then there is light itself, that which illumines. It reveals, and in large part produces every beauty of the universe; and yet it is itself wholly unseen. There is no glow of beauty on the face of the sky but light produces it. There is no loveliness of the flowers but light gives it. There is no sublimity of color anywhere but light is its source. Yet light, which reveals and enriches all, is itself unrevealed. We used to think it was light when we saw a bright beam streaming into the darkened room through some small opening. Later we learned it was not light, but dust that reflected light. The light was invisible; we saw dust glorified.

Light, the unseen source of all sublimity, is thus fitly chosen as the symbol of the Holy Spirit, who constantly gives himself to reveal the Saviour, but who is himself unrevealed. "He shall glorify me," said Jesus. "He shall take of mine, and shall show it unto you." He makes Christ real. He makes men strong.

But he himself remains forever hidden, forever out of sight.

Abounding Though Hidden

We will, however, miss the whole heart of this truth if we think of the Holy Spirit's life as one of self-sacrifice. It is not sacrificial. The root makes no sacrifice; it finds itself in giving its total resource in the glory of the flower. So too the Holy Spirit experiences no loss in remaining hidden. He is consciously complete in manifesting the glory of Jesus Christ.

This is a noble truth, a truth that we too often miss. We speak the names of the world's great men—Washington, Lincoln, Gladstone, and the rest. We think of them as men who toiled sublimely and achieved magnificently; and so they are; but did you ever think of this: that not one of them could have achieved anything if he had not found men who believed in him; men who were willing to toil with him unseen, experiencing their life's full self-realization simply in enabling him to do his work? Perhaps we have never grasped it; nevertheless it is true. It is true of those great men and it is true of all great men everywhere. No man standing alone can ever come to greatness. Men can only become great who are first great in the thought of their friends, who believe in them and are willing to work with and for them. There are many lives whose glory in this world, and perhaps in the next, must be like the glory of the Holy Spirit—the utter joy of fulfilling the lives of those who were made to be the leaders of men. Let us understand it; let us see it; let us grasp it: God has not made one single soul to live, or to be, or to achieve alone. God is not a solitary Personality; he is a tri-unity. All his persons co-operate in everything God does; and whether it is the toil of creation or the toil of redemption, it unites the whole of God.

THE SOLIDARITY OF OUR LIVES

So must it be with us. How often we live as if we were complete, separate, independent beings! We use our friends to-day and despise them to-morrow. We accept favors and speak contemptuously of those from whom we receive them. We seem to feel that our very superiority, which we frankly admit to ourselves, gives us rights above common man. We speak of other men sometimes in words almost of contempt. Oh, the pity of it! If you are superior to another, is it not the gift of God that made you so? And does this not put you in the other's debt? The very loveliness of your face and form—if, indeed, you are more lovely to look upon than another—belongs to humanity. It is not yours. No, God did not make you in mind or face or form or strength to be by your little separate self, independent of the rest of man. He made you to be a part of the total human race, the brotherhood of man. He made you to be completed in the race; to be completed, first, in your family, then in your friends, and then in the whole wide solidarity of men. Life is one; and he who does not find himself by losing himself in the unity of the whole never finds himself at all.

My brothers, there is no idea that God has repeated so constantly as this: the idea of separate individualities combined in some larger whole. Individuality is peculiar, exclusive, a separate entity; but it is not independent. It is a constituent part of some larger whole to all of which it stands related by some law of reciprocity, some law of mutual service and dependence.

God made the substance called protoplasm. No one knows what it is. Probably no one ever will. When life is starting, it is just one homogeneous mass. Then swiftly, in those formative days, God gives individuality to it. We know not how. Protoplasm becomes protoplasms. There are brain protoplasm, heart protoplasm, lung protoplasm; protoplasm with a different individualty for every different organ. The part of it that becomes heart never does anything but pump blood for the whole body. The part of it that becomes lungs never does anything but breathe for the whole body. The part of it that becomes brain never does anything but know for the whole body. Here is individuality combined with solidarity. We have each organ peculiar and individual in its function, but all bound together in the unity of one mighty purpose serving and being served in the solidarity of the whole. This is what God is—a tri-unity of personality. This is what God means the world and the human race to be—a unity of individual personalities, toiling together in one great, mighty purpose. Oh, how we need to rise out of our petty, revolting, shameful assertiveness and lose ourselves, that, losing ourselves, we may find ourselves!

THE HOLY SPIRIT'S WORK

Returning, now, more particularly to the person of the Holy Spirit, we notice that his work is manifold. It is so rich that we hardly know where to begin or how adequately to make it throb with life. We can but trust that in the effort he himself will work with us; and that every word may be vitalized by Him who alone can give it power.

CONVICTION OF SIN

First, then, the Holy Ghost brings men to conviction—convictions as distinct from conclusions. We can see immediately that this is a most intimate and searching work. Men can bring each other to conclusions; but they can with difficulty, if at all, subdue that tide of personal assertiveness that is involved in lifting conclusions into convictions. Some years ago I was a witness to this conversation, which illustrates the point: Two ministers were discussing the question of the virgin birth. One believed it; the other regarded it as a matter of no importance. Said the believing minister, "Let us discuss this question and discover its bearing and its basis." "No," said the other, "you know more about it than I do and I will not let you tie me up." Here is the point. One of those men would almost certainly have led the other to a conclusion;

but he would have been totally unable to lead him to a conviction. In convictions there are involved not only information and opinions, but also a personal attitude. When truth is so powerful that it subdues us and challenges all our contrary willing, it is a conviction. We cannot escape it. We may even yet say, "No," but our "No" is only rebellion, personal assertiveness without intellectual foundation. "He will reprove the world"—what a blessing it is to be convicted by his sure light!

"He will reprove the world of sin." There is something wrong with men. We are restless and ill-content. We are not getting the best out of life. Our most fundamental need is to know what is wrong, and to show us what is wrong is the first ministry of the Holy Spirit.

An instance of his searching intimate work comes to mind across a span of twenty years. A family was sitting together on the front seat of a country church. They had brought to the house of God the dead body of a relative. Sitting there among them was a man who all his life had been saying "No" to God. He was the husband and father, a man in his fifties. That day as he sat in the church the Spirit dealt with him. He made it seem to him as if it were he himself lying there in that coffin, and as if his family, who were sitting there beside him, were mourning his passing. He seemed to feel them saying, "Father has lived his life and died without salvation." He sat through that service with this one realization throbbing and beating in his soul. At night he said to his pastor: "Preacher, I've got to get converted. I saw my whole life today as I never saw it before." And then he told the story.

"You'd better do it now," said his pastor. "Such a call is most serious."

"No, not now," he replied. "I will think about it for a few weeks and then do it."

That was conviction of sin.

How many different circumstances one could relate of the Holy Spirit's tender ministry in bringing men to conviction of sin! The one that Jesus picked out is perhaps the most amazing of all. He said, "He will reprove the world of sin, . . . because they believe not on me." Have you ever thought of it? Jesus says the spring of unbelief is sin. Here is a man who is standing aloof from Jesus Christ. Jesus says the explanation of his unbelief is not in his intellect, but in his willful heart. He will convict the world of sin because they have come up into the Presence and have been dull to it. Unbelief is a moral failure. We get it instantly in illustration. The man who sees the masterpieces of Raphael or DaVinci and does not rejoice in them reveals his own lack of culture. The man who reads Shakespeare and is unconscious of his mastery of thought discloses his own intellectual insensitiveness. This is *judgment,* said Jesus, that in me the finality of truth stands revealed, and men go by—"He will reprove the world of sin, . . . because they believe not on me."

CONVICTION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS

And then after sin comes righteousness. "He will reprove the world . . . of righteousness, because I go to my Father." Jesus triumphant over death, risen and ascended, is the moral vindication of all history. Had Jesus remained in the sepulcher, the despair of ancient paganism must have become more complete, and the darkness of hopeless pessimism must have overspread all life. He arose, and in rising vindicated the moral purpose of the years; and against the background of this sublime fact the Holy Spirit lifts up into conviction *righteousness* in the souls of men.

TO CONVICT OF JUDGMENT

And then yet once more. "He will reprove the world . . . of judgment, because the prince of this world is judged." With the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus wrong stood doomed and damned in the universe. Hell's utmost plot has failed; and hell itself is judged. And how true it is all down the centuries! There is a new spirit and point of view in life since Jesus rose.

The city that crucified him had to pass. It was quickly made a heap of ruins. The gladiatorial show, the slave mart, the tutelage of women, the exposing of infants and aged, the tyranny of autocratic rule, the oppression of the weak, the egoism even of ethical ideals, the cheapness and contempt of life—they all had to go. The prince of this world stands judged. The Son of God incarnate, crucified and risen again, divides the ages. No wrong can endure. All wrong must go down. Progressively oppression must yield to love and war to peace.

TO REVEAL AND GLORIFY ME

And then the thought of Jesus leaves the world and dwells upon the ministry of the Spirit in the lives of those who have committed themselves unto him. He will take of the things that are mine and give them unto you, he says. He will guide you in all the truth.[1] He will show you things to come. How manifold is his mystic ministry to believers!

My brethren, I would like to record my personal testimony to the truth of this promise of supernatural guidance. I have been engaged for more than fifteen years now in an endeavor so much bigger than I am; in an endeavor that has made demands upon me so much greater than my powers that I have often felt like a man shooting at random in the night. I have not seen either what I was doing or how it would come out. For fifteen years I have been doing this; and yet I sit here to-night, and looking back over those years, I can see as I can see the stars in the skies, that a Divine Providence has put into my hands just the books I needed and always just when I needed them; that this same Providence has guided me with wisdom that was not my own and has stilled me to a patience that was foreign to my burning soul; that he has sent to me influential friends just when I had to have them or to fail. Yes, he will guide us in all our relations to his truth. In all the problems of life in Christ, in all the tasks of our toil in Christ he will be our wisdom and our stay.

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[1] *εἰς τὴν ἀληθειαν*, margin *ἐν τη ἀληθειᾳ;* but, as Deismann shows, *ἐις* was used for *ἐν* in the koine of Jesus' day, and the definite article before "truth" shows Jesus was thinking of a well-known body of truth, the gospel he had intrusted to them (John 16. 13).

"I believe in the Holy Ghost." There is nothing we need more, to-day, than a new dependence upon this mysterious inner Helper of our souls. Jesus warned his first church far back at the beginning that they should not undertake to do anything until first they had been illumined—"until," as he said, "the Holy Ghost shall come upon thee." They had the truth, for he had lived the truth among them. Their need was the truth aflame, the truth in all that burning certainty which the Holy Ghost could give to it. Let me put it this way: The world without the fact of Christ is the darkness of paganism; but the world without the illumination of the Spirit is the deadness of formalism. Truth alone will not save the world; it needs truth aflame, truth that glows and burns in the souls of men—this is the truth that will save. Oh, we need a baptism of the Holy Ghost to make the blessed facts which we believe throb and glow with light divine! How deeply conscious I am of my own shortcomings! How much my ministry needs to be illumined by this flame! I have preached with passion, and yet the passion of my preaching seems not to kindle the souls of men and women. Yes, we need the Holy Ghost to preach and we need the Holy Ghost to live. If every fact in which I believe and which I preach could be made to glow to-night, and every fact in which you believe and by which you live could be made to glow to-night, how it would change the world!

We need that inner illumination to light up all the vast reaches of Christ until we see the littleness of our sin and the glory of our Saviour, until we lose ourselves, and losing, find ourselves! How blessed it is! He said, "I will not leave you in your helplessness"—my helplessness, your helplessness—"I will come to you." "I will pray the Father, and he shall give you another Comforter . . . the Spirit of truth," "that he may abide with you forever."

I want to close this meditation with the words of an ancient hymn. Robert II of France wrote it in the Middle Ages; a hymn of the Holy Ghost; a hymn that is a prayer:

"Come, Holy Ghost, in love,
Set on us from above
Thine own bright ray!
Divinely Good thou art;
Thy sacred gifts impart
To gladden each sad heart:
O come to-day!

"Come, tenderest Friend, and best,
Our most delightful Guest,
With soothing power:
Rest, which the weary know,
Shade, 'mid the noontide glow,
Peace, when deep griefs o'erflow,
Cheer us, this hour!

"Come, Light serene, and still
Our inmost bosoms fill,
Dwell in each breast;
We know no dawn but thine,
Send forth thy beams divine,
On our dark souls to shine,
And make us blest!

"Come, all the faithful bless;
Let all who Christ confess
His praise employ;
Give virtue's rich reward,
Victorious death accord,
And, with our glorious Lord,
Eternal joy!"

My brethren, we believe in the Holy Ghost, the Inner Helper, the Divine Comforter.

CHAPTER VIII

"THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH"

"The holy catholic Church, the communion of saints."

"And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fullness of him that filleth all in all."—*Ephesians 1. 22-23.*

CHAPTER VIII

"THE HOLY CATHOLIC CHURCH"

THE CHURCH IS A SOLIDARITY

THE Christian Church is a body—a community—a solidarity—a closely integrated whole. Joining the church is, of course, outwardly, a form, as the form of baptism, or confessing one's faith; but joining the church is also an inward vitality. It is a spiritual birth. It is an illumination by the Holy Ghost. It is an inflowing of new life that enables failing, sinning men to rise to the level where solidarity with Christ and his redeemed becomes possible.

By nature man is not a member of the body of Christ. Rather he is an egoistic, self-filled and self-driven individual. He does not understand either the joy of obedience or the joy of humility. For him life is the satisfaction of his pride and self-will. He vaguely feels that he is wrong; he longs for something nobler than he knows; but it is utterly beyond him. As Jesus said, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

But let us take up again our thought that the church is a community, a solidarity. It is an indivisible whole in the image of the Trinity of God. In it redeemed men are made one in Christ as he is one in the Father. Jesus Christ is its Head, its glory. It is ransomed by his cross, illuminated by his Spirit, empowered by his might. All the resource of the infinite God is invested in it, and to it belong his everlastings.

Saint Bernard thus describes the church:

> The church is an organization pervaded by the Spirit of the living God, and by him illuminated and vitalized. In its bosom is truth that is inaccessible to human reason, but that possessed (through the church) satisfies the soul.
>
> It stands before men with a unique and superlative purpose: to secure to men blessings spiritual, immeasurable, immortal. In the midst of this material, temporal, and perishing world it alone is cognizant of the spiritual and abiding. It alone is cognizant of man's spiritual possibilities and is pledged to their fulfillment.

Saint Bernard spoke those words a thousand years ago, but they are still profoundly true. We feel their reality to-night.

When John Henry Newman was the rector of Saint Mary's Church at Oxford, England, he preached a series of three sermons on the church:

"The Visible Church for the Sake of the Elect,"

"The Communion of the Saints,"

"The Church a Home for the Lonely."

In these sermons Newman portrays the significance and value of the church in luminous sentences. He says in substance, I find in my soul aspirations, spiritual desires, noble outreachings, a sense of the ideal, the perfect, the infinite; but in the world about me I find on every hand the denial of these aspirations, the contradictions of these outreachings. And then he presents the church as the one outward fact that corresponds to and brings a worthy answer to his soul. Yes, this is the church. It is the answer to our souls; and it is this because the transcendent Christ is in it—the transcendent Christ and ten thousand times ten thousand of his redeemed saints, whose united testimony across the centuries makes him a convincing reality. The church is, then, the answer because Christ is in it; but it brings this answer down across the generations because it is a solidarity of men.

We cannot overemphasize this truth. The

church is a solidarity, an integrated whole. Our natural point of view is so egoistic that it is difficult for us to realize that we are members one of another. But, my brothers, the Church of Christ is a solidarity; and it is only as we are related to that solidarity that we can experience salvation. The glory of God's final purpose belongs not to individuals, but to a solidarity of men.

We are apt to think of final salvation as the individual's securing of a passing mark at the throne, much as students are awarded grades and passed at the university; but it is not so. Salvation is being related to Jesus Christ in and through his church. We do not attain unto eternal life as so many perfected individuals who have proved ourselves worthy of the supreme reward. Rather we are united, as helpless and unworthy men, to Jesus Christ, and in him to his body, the church. In that relationship we are progressively transformed and lifted into his image.

Salvation is thus seen to be unity with Christ and with all those who are united to him. There is no other salvation than to experience this unity. There is no other doorway into destiny and fulfillment than by this unity. One brick cannot be sublime, it must be related to the temple; so also is the individual soul.

This doctrine of the Christian Church as an integrated body, a unity, stretches back to apostolic times. Saint Paul taught it; yet it did not gain expression in the church's earliest credal formularies. One is rather surprised that it did not; such, nevertheless, is the fact. The creeds of Irenæus and Tertullian make no mention of the church. The earliest reference to the church in the creeds is in the old Latin confession of the third century. The clause runs, "I believe in the holy church." At Nicæa the phrase was similarly "the holy church." The word "catholic" was a later addition. At Constantinople, fifty years after Nicæa, the clause had become, "I believe in the Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church." In the year 455, a bishop of Reji in southern Gaul, whose name was Faustus, added the interpretive phrase "the communion of the saints."

Here, then, are five words that have been used to describe the Christian Church:

The word "ecclesia," or church; the word "holy"; the word "catholic"; the word "apostolic"; the phrase, "the communion of saints." We can make no better rapid approach to the total significance of the church than by examining each of these five words.

Ecclesia. The church is an "ecclesia"; that is, a body of men called out from the world; an integrated community within the whole body of humanity. How splendidly Paul has developed this sense of the church as an integrated community, in Ephesians, where he pictures the saints toiling together, each for the perfecting of all the rest, until we all come together into the measure of the fullness of Christ! The church then is an *ecclesia*, a community called out from the ordinary life and interests of the world. Here is the call: "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The church is a community called; called out from the world, and called into fellowship and unity with Jesus Christ; a community of whomsoever will hear God's eager loving invitation.

Holy. And then it is "holy." The word would be more suggestive if it were translated "purified," for Christian thought knows no human holiness save that which is attained through God's redeeming grace. We are, then, a cleansed, a purified people. There are two ideas here: First, that of the redeeming grace of God by which we are washed. Second, that of the resulting state of purity. Being washed, we live washed lives. The Christian Church from the beginning has been desperately in earnest that the cleansed soul must live a cleansed life. "Christ also loved the church, and gave himself for it; that he might sanctify and cleanse it with the washing of water by the word. That he might present it to himself a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing."

Catholic. Third, it is a "catholic church." Someone—I do not remember who, and it is not important—came to me and said, "You don't believe in the Catholic Church, do you?" So many people seem to regard the word "catholic" as the peculiar possession of the Church of Rome, whereas it is not. There are the Roman Catholic Church and the Greek Catholic Church; and older than either is the Catholic Church, which simply means "universal church." This adjective was in use long before the primacy of Rome had been recognized. The Catholic Church of Christ is the whole body of redeemed men in all lands and all ages who are living in communion with him through the ministry of the two witnesses which he left in the world, the Holy Spirit and the apostles. It includes the Church of Rome, just insofar as Rome is true in teaching and life to the primitive deposit of faith; and it includes every other church just insofar as that other church is similarly true. But whether it be Rome or Protestantism, no church is a part of catholic Christianity if it denies or obscures the primitive deposit or ceases to depend upon the supernatural Holy Spirit to be the illuminer and leader of its life. When our Protestant schools are so seriously negative, and in their pride, so indifferent to the Holy Spirit, we need to be more concerned lest our church be unworthy to use the word "catholic" than with whether its use will confuse us with Rome. The universal community rising above all distinctions of race or class or age is the catholic church—the Church of Christ clear round the world, and clear down the centuries.

Once in a while one meets a person who is truly Christian, but who nevertheless does not believe in foreign missions. What an amazing superficiality! To deny foreign missions is inevitably to deny also the gospel itself, for the gospel of Jesus Christ belongs to all humanity. Indeed, I think it is a mistake to use the word "foreign." It gives the notion that the gospel belongs to one race, and that it is foreign to all other races. The truth of the matter is, we are all foreigners until we are regenerated by the power of the Holy Ghost. The gospel comes to us all as to foreigners; it brings to us the boon of citizenship in the kingdom of God. But it comes equally to every race and people. Jesus said, "Go ye . . . and preach the gospel to every creature." Yes, I believe in the catholic church.

Apostolic. This is a great word. It is a word that we need to recover in our present-day thinking. It sets forth that the church is not a mere human uplift society; that it is not just another organization trying to do all the good it can in every way. It sets forth, on the contrary, that the Christian Church is a divinely instituted, equipped and commissioned institution. It is in the world to do good in a particular way. It is in the world to do good by a manifold witness to Jesus Christ. The Christian Church is the expression of Jesus Christ; he, manifest, is salvation. Is not this what he said, "And I, if I be lifted up from the earth, will draw all men unto me"?

What a tragedy it is that the church in our times does not have a firmer grasp upon this, its peculiar power! We are not devisers of clever social solutions. We are, instead, witnesses to the age-old wisdom of God in Christ; and our effectiveness will be measured by the clearness with which we understand our responsibility and the consecration with which we dedicate our lives to it. If we are either to remain Christian or to be effective, we must be faithful to that precious deposit—the truth Jesus intrusted to his apostles.

There are universities which bear the name of Christ, and which were built and are being maintained by Christian money, which are in actual fact arrayed against him. His glory and authority are denied in them. Sometimes his very existence is repudiated as unhistorical and his ideals as impractical. A crude behaviorism is taught as science, and all the majesty of Christian ethics is reduced to mere social utility.

My friends, not everything that is called Christian is such in fact. We are too much wasting our forces with loose, indefinite endeavor. It is time we were recovering our commission. Jesus did not send us into the world to philosophize; Jesus did not send us into the world to discover truth. He gave us the truth. He himself is the truth. He sent us into the world to be witnesses to him, to relate men to him, and the institution, be it university or church, that is not doing this is not Christian. The bank president has as much the right to use the wealth of his depositors for his private speculations as the professor in a Christian college has to use the influence given to him by his church to lead its youth up the blind alleys of his own private speculations often quickly formed and poorly grounded. If his college be Christian, his commission is to glorify Christ; and to teach contrary to Christ and the apostolic faith in a Christian institution is a betrayal of trust. Paul said: "I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received," and every man that is Christian must say the same. We are not explorers of reality in quest of a gospel; we are, rather, men intrusted with the supremely precious value of all ages—*The Total Fact of Christ.*

A Community. And then the church is a community. "I believe in the . . . communion of saints." I have heard it said that this part of the Creed refers to a mysterious communion with the invisible dead; but I do not so understand it. The reference is simply to the solidarity of redeemed men. The word "communion" is from the Latin *com-munio*, and it means "to build a wall on all sides." It describes the unity of the men and women who have together fortified themselves. The etymology is finely suggestive. The church is a body of men and women who have fortified themselves in Christ, against all the assaults of a hostile world. They live one life in Christ, the world shut out, themselves shut in. Together, as Paul says, through the ministry of each for all and of all for each, they move on to their united destiny: "Until we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ."

We have overdone the emphasis upon the individual in salvation. Salvation is a community affair. We are saved by being related to Christ, in the church, his body. And then we grow in grace by serving and being served in the complex relationships of that body. No man goes to heaven alone. As long as a man wants to be alone, he is headed the other way. There is no room for all-alone people before the throne of the triune God. Seeberg says the fathers taught that the Christian does not live alone, but in connection with the brotherhood of the church, in its harmony of spirit, in its spirit of love, in its teaching and faith, in its admonition, in its ministries to physical need.

How nobly the primitive church realized itself as a community—one body in Christ! If a man were a Christian, every Christian's door was open to him. All he needed to do was to give the secret sign, and he was a welcome guest at every Christian table. If he were out of work, the church supported him until he found work. If his earnings were insufficient for his needs, the church added to them. Every Lord's Day they came together to worship Jesus early in the morning, before the rising of the sun. From their worship they went to their work, and then at night they came back again into their catacombs to renew their worship. When their heroic leaders were in prison, at the peril of their own lives, they ministered to them. When their brethren were burned to death in the arena or devoured by wild beasts, they who watched the sacrifice gathered up the dust or bones and carried it to their altars. How they loved their martyred saints! And how together they lived their lives, common lives, and rejoiced in their common hope.

This is the church—holy, catholic, apostolic, a community. And now what is your relation to it? Your souls are precious to yourselves. They are precious to God. You want to be saved. You want to belong to all those infinities that are out there. If you want to arrive, you must be built into Christ, in and through his church, by the power of the Holy Ghost. You must live there in contact with Christ in the life of the church, until eternal life in you grows up into the fullness of Christ. God is not saving you as just an independent fragment of personality. He is saving you by building you into the body of which Christ is the head. He holds you there, your minds stimulated by the church's thought, your ideas corrected by its truth, your zeal quickened by its devotion, your purpose established by its steadfastness, your faith strengthened by its witness, your love enriched by its love poured out, your hope confirmed by its fellowship, your self perfected in its bosom.

It is not only a ministry to you, it is also ministry through you. In Christ we are all ministers. There is a service that we render each other by the very fact that we are members of the Christian community, rejoicing in its sublimities and enjoying the wealth of its life. A man cannot be a Christian and believe in and love the great things of Christ without helping every other Christian heart with which he comes into contact. We do not say "Hallelujah!" very much to-day. I am not criticizing, I am simply noting the fact; but every time our faces are wreathed in an exultant smile, when worshiping we rejoice in some precious hope or experience, we help every man who shares that worship with us. We cannot be alive in the body of Christ without being ministers.

There is also that more specific service and responsibility which is ours, in the body of Christ. The preacher is not the only minister of Christ in the community. He is one of the ministers. We all are also ministers. I cannot name your specific service, but God has one for you. Have you ever faced the fact of your responsibility? What John and Paul did for their generation, what Luther and Melanchthon and Calvin did for theirs, what

Wesley and Asbury did for theirs, that you and I must do for ours, or else it will be left undone.

The poet puts the passion of it into a beautiful stanza:

"Come nearer, Sun of Righteousness, that we,
  Whose dim, short hours of day so swiftly run,
So overwhelmed with love and light may be,
  So lost in glory of thy nearing Sun
That not our light, but thine, the world may see—
  New praise to thee through our poor lives be won."

God's Purpose Is in the Church

Then, finally, the purpose of God is in the Church of God, for the church is the bride of Christ. Oh, yes! There are those who are in the church formally who are not in it vitally. I do not speak of these. And there are those outside the formal body of Christ who are nevertheless of it, or who will come into it by the direct appeal of the Holy Spirit in their death experience. But, my brethren, these admissions do not change the fact that God's purpose is in the church that he redeemed by the blood of Jesus Christ his only begotten Son. Let me say it again, and let us heed it: Only as our lives are built into Christ, and the body of his invisible church, by the Holy Spirit and through the apostolic witness, will we share the infinite, the everlasting purpose of God, for the purpose of God is in the church.

And so together we say with expectant joy: "I believe in the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints"—the great body of men of all ages and all races and all circumstances bound into one; and together lifted by the grace and power of Christ through the Holy Spirit into the image of his perfection. How wonderful it will be, when the vale of sense falls from our sight, and we behold this finished purpose that has been sweeping through the ages! Oh, the joy! by his dear grace, of belonging to it! Allelujah!

PRAYER

Triune God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, we pray thee to establish us in the body of thy church, thy church which thou hast adorned with the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord. We have nothing in our hands to bring; but just as we are we come, to find in him our glory, our sufficiency, our all in all. Amen.

CHAPTER IX

“THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS”

“The forgiveness of sins.”

“God so loved the world [in just this sort of way], that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”—*John 3. 16.*

CHAPTER IX

"THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS"

THE forgiveness of sins is a major undertaking even for the infinite God.

We have missed the solemn significance of pain and death in the world if we do not take sin seriously. The consciences of men as well as the divine revelation witness that "By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin."

God is a unity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. He is one in being, one in love, and one in purpose. The law by which God is one in being is a mystery of his own eternal life. We cannot at all approach it. The law by which he is one in love and purpose is his holiness. The perfection of this unity is his glory. Creation is the song of God's glory; it is the self-expression of his joy in the perfection of his unity. God uttered himself; his words were stars and suns and worlds.

It is quite impossible for our intellects to conceive the relation of the infinite to time and space as we know them. It would seem certain that God must experience time, since he experiences action, and action is possible only in the time relation; but it seems equally certain that the past does not fall out of God's life as we have the sense of it doing with us. In some way the past must be forever present to God.

The perfection of God, then, is not only the present absolute unity of his life, but the uninterrupted unity of his life through all the sweep of his eternity. There is not one instant in all the ages of his being when God has experienced the least approach to division either in purpose or desire or thought. Always his Persons have been one—one in being, one in love, one in will. The smallest instant's departure from absolute right, from perfect love and unity, would wreck the Infinite. The complete absence of the least degree of such disunity is God's glory. His life is utterly blessed because it is perfectly united. It is flooded with holy harmony. It is rich with holy love. Creation is the song of this glory. It is the poem of God's holy self-expression. God utters his unity in the universe. All nature sings the noble unity of God. God meant the topmost note in his song to be the human race—a holy race, one as God is one;

but until now this part of his purpose has failed. We have refused unity. We are a broken race. We are a multitude of striving, hating individuals. How tragically true are the words of Paul, "For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God"! This is the awful fact of sin. The human race is a failure. Its broken, disunited life cannot utter the holiness of God. We are a wild discord of lawless individualism. We are a profaning of God's unity, a violation of his holiness.

THE PROBLEM INVOLVED IN THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS

And now we begin to glimpse the dimensions of the problem of forgiveness. Sin violates all the sanctities of God's life. It profanes the very law of his being; and having come into the stream of history, it abides forever. God cannot lose it out of his knowledge. If, then, he is to forgive sin, he must so deal with it as to be satisfied. He must relate it to the song of his holiness. He must so modify his self-expression that the dreadful discord of sin is resolved by it. He must find a way of relating it to his total song so that, standing forever there, it will abide a new and deeper revelation of the glory of his holiness.

Is this possible? Can human sin, its revolting trail of pride and hate and blood and shame, indeed be harmonized? Are the resources even of divine omnipotence and of holy love sufficient for the undertaking? My brethren, God's holy Word, and the Cross and Resurrection of Jesus answer, Yes. "I believe in . . . the forgiveness of sins."

We began with the statement that the forgiveness of sins is a major undertaking even for the infinite God. Let us now set forth in order a statement of the manifold problem God faces in accomplishing this tremendous work.

1. First of all, there is the inevitable shock and revulsion divine holiness experiences when sin and disorder become facts in his orderly universe. This is the problem of guilt which we experience in our own consciences. The guiltiness of sin is a serious fact not only for God but for the sinner himself, and for all morally sensitive personalities.

2. Facing this moral situation, God needs first to achieve an expression of all that he feels. He must utter his judgment upon sin. He must utter his eager redemptive love. He must so utter himself that his whole life is satisfied. Human history must proclaim his

judgment and his redemptive love as all creation sings his holiness. God must be expressed. All that he feels must stand a part of the imperishable record of created being.

3. But God needs more than self-expression. He must help men. He must find a means of winning men from their sin. He must show them its futility. He must woo them from their shrinking fear of his holiness. He must win them from sin's willfulness.

4. Then, too, there is the problem of the evil influence of man's false choices upon the freedom of other men. These must be overruled for good. Else the memory of our blasting influence upon the souls of others would damn us even before the glory of the throne.

5. Next, the human race must be organized into a unity. It must become in fact a holy solidarity after the pattern of the triune God.

6. Then redeemed men must be delivered from the oppressing narrowness of their present limitations and empowered for the measureless life of the sons of God.

7. Finally, lost personalities must be related to God's eternal purpose—not as sons, yet they must have some relation to the plan, for the whole universe must make at last one

music, and utter forth without defect the glory of perfect holiness.

How God Has Met This Problem

This is the stupendous task God faces in undertaking the forgiveness of sins. It is a responsibility that taxes to the utmost the measureless resource of the infinite God. How he has accomplished it has been progressively disclosed in Scripture. It begins with dim suggestions. It is unfolded through centuries of increasing wonders of grace and power. It was crowned at last with angel songs, virgin motherhood, incarnation, mighty signs, stainless goodness, Good Friday's darkness and the rending veil, Easter's triumph and the Pentecostal power. We wait yet for one final sublimity—his second manifestation, and the resurrection of the dead.

How fitting is our English word "forgiveness" to express this wondrous grace of God! "Forgiveness" comes from the old English "giefen"—"to give." It adds the intensive "for." Forgiveness, then, is supreme giving. We are healed of our sins by the supreme giving of the holy God. Well, indeed, does Paul write: "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." "He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." "O, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!"

Having caught thus quickly a panoroma of the divine program for the forgiveness of sin, we turn back now to view each great detail. We begin with the need for the expression of God's holy judgment to stand in history over against the century-long fact of human sin.

JUDGMENT

Sin has guilt. We feel it intuitively. We cannot face serious sin without experiencing the moral emotion of judgment, the feeling that it deserves ill; and, when we contemplate the total fact of human sin as it must appear to the holy God, we are forced to recognize that it has done and forever does frightful violence to his moral glory.

God would not be good if he could ignore this violation of his sanctities. It is precisely because he is a flooding tide of goodness that he cannot and does not pass sin by. Sin violates God's glory, and he inevitably responds in judgment. This response is necessary at once to God, to angels and to men. Every morally sensitive personality must feel the necessity that judgment come upon sin. There is a reciprocity in the moral universe as certainly as there is in the physical. Action and reaction must everywhere be equal and in opposite directions. The word of Scripture and the intuitions of the human soul agree: the reciprocity of sin is death. Sin is the assertion of self which is unconscious of the race and which robs the race. Death is the isolation of the individual from the race by the loss of the body. Death is thus at once the fitting consequence of sin's false choice which separates men from the race; and it is also its penalty. It is the beginning of God's answer to man's sin history; but it is only the beginning, and it never fully satisfied God.

REDEMPTION

As God faces man and the record of his sin, he feels within himself a complex urge. He loves the sinner, insofar as he yet has moral possibilities; and there is in his holiness an urge to express this love. He feels judgment toward the sinner, insofar as his bearing is false; and there is an urge to express this judgment. He feels also an urge to rescue the sinner. He wants not only to express his holiness but he wants to recover sinning man from the confusion, the futility, the falsity of his sin. He wants to save him. There is thus a threefold urgency in God's life as he faces the fact of man's sin, and he needs that this whole urgency shall come to complete expression in history, and that it shall be understood both by sinful man and by all other intelligences.

God meets this need by all his millenniums long and worldwide work of self-revelation and judgment. In Israel he makes his self-disclosure uniquely full and gives to it supreme significance. There are visions and voices and mighty deeds. At last he himself comes to men. He identifies himself with our ruined race and its sin-marred history. He becomes a Son of man forever. He takes into his own life our death, the penalty of our sin. He dies and is buried. He stands thus over against man's record of sin the expression of his moral judgment in death, and in death lifted up into the very life of God. It is there forever. It stands in the history both of God and of the race imperishable, the judgment, the moral reciprocity of sin.

Having thus died with us and for us, he triumphs over death. He lives again, still a man of our manhood, the center and head of the new race, which is to be organized about him. He solidifies it in himself. He guides it by his wisdom. He enriches it with his glory. He transforms it by his omnipotence. In unity with himself he lifts it into the vision of the eternal unity and glory of God.

By this self-identification with us, this increasing self-disclosure, this redemptive suffering, and this sublime triumph God has both expressed himself, revealed himself to men, and begun the actual movement of salvation. We will seek, hurriedly, just to glimpse these several elements in God's wonderful achievement.

God Takes Judgment Upon Himself

First of all it is an expression of God's judgment. God does not pass by man's sin; he condemns it. He sentences it with death. Then he becomes identified with our race, so that all its failure and shame and guilt belong to him. Humanity is a race of interdependent lives, not so many independent individuals;

and Christ comes into it. He dies our death, the penalty of our sin. He lifts death up into his own life, and stands it there in solemn grandeur, the moral reciprocity of sin. Could we add up all sin; could we grasp the totality of its century-long falsity, treachery, and pettiness; could we feel the enormity of its ruin and cruelty, yet the death of Jesus Christ God's incarnate Son upon the cross must be seen to be its adequate moral reciprocity. There is no depth of guiltiness, no accumulated sum of guiltiness which in its moral demerit is greater than the judgment that is uttered upon it in Christ's cross. When death has been lifted up into the life of the Triune God judgment is in expression unto infinity.

One cannot exaggerate the solemnity and sublimity of this moral deed. In comparison with the fact of pain and death in the race, it is more expressive. The century-long, resistless ruin of death, engulfing the race, does, indeed, express the guiltiness of sin; but how much more does the cross express it! We see death lifted up into the divine life. God came utterly near men. He turned the tides of his judgment back upon himself. He stood out under them. He bore them. Such a word of judgment is infinitely expressive.

Nothing conceivable could be added of moral emphasis whether from the point of view of God, angels, or men. The cross of Jesus speaks a measureless condemnation. It says sin means death, always, everywhere, even when it touches the life of the omnipotent God. The very Trinity of God cannot come closely in touch with sin without suffering its reciprocity—death.

God Expresses His Redemptive Love

In the cross of Christ the utmost urge of holiness to express itself in judgment upon sin is indeed fully satisfied. We turn now the other side of the shield and consider the abyss of love that is in expression there. When God identifies himself with the human race, it is an expression of love. It is the nature of love to seek for union with that which it finds beautiful. We press lovely blooms to our faces. We gaze wonderingly at every noble landscape, and feel its mystic pull upon our souls. Love cannot stand apart. Love must come near. It would have been inevitable, even apart from sin, that God the Father Almighty become one with the race which he created in his own image; but this is not the wonder of the love of God which streams to us in Messiah, Jesus, our Lord. How nobly Paul has phrased it! He says: "Scarcely for a righteous man will one die: yet, peradventure for a good man some would even dare to die. But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us!" No, God did not become one with a sinless humanity. Rather he became one with a race broken and ruined. He loved us in spite of our falsity. He became one with us in spite of our ruin. When God became one with the human race, it was bankrupt. The only glory it could have was that which he brought with him. God invested his glory in a lost cause; he gave himself to recover a ruined race. This is the love of God.

And God's holiness needs to have this love in complete expression. It must be so expressed that every intelligence in the universe will be able to apprehend the wonder of the fact. It must be so expressed that God himself will know his utmost truth has been uttered. This is the divine urgency of love which we see in the cross; and only God himself can comprehend the adequacy of that expression. Revelation cannot do more than simply state the facts, and say, "God loved the world in just such a way." The cross reveals God's love as measureless. There is no grace of self-sacrifice to which it is not equal. God's love has been uttered. Eternity can never exhaust the heights and depths of meaning in this soaring note of God's redemptive song.

God Gets an Effective Move in Salvation

And then, third, the cross of Jesus is an effective move in salvation. God comes to man as he is—willful, self-centered, proud, condemned by his own conscience, rebellious and afraid—and he brings him release. He brings him a release that is at once morally majestic, aboundingly sufficient, and persuasively tender. Our hearts are won by God's tenderness. Our consciences are satisfied with the majesty of his moral emphasis. We rise out of our fears. We believe in his unbounded goodness. We dare to come nigh. We yield ourselves to be transformed and mastered.

This responding to God's grace, this yielding to his power is salvation. There is nothing more for us to do. God has uttered himself, and the utterance of himself is salvation.

Already we can glimpse much of the remaining sufficiency of Christ, though our formal discussion has not advanced beyond God's need of an adequate self-expression: for wherever God's thought is completely and effectively uttered, it must comprehend salvation. It is impossible that there could be a human need for which there is not the full answer in the holiness of the everlasting God. The complete self-expression of the Holy Trinity of God is salvation.

GOD SHOWS SIN'S FUTILITY AND WINS THE SINNER

However, we must keep to the plan, and so we return to our outline of the seven necessities to forgiveness. The third is the necessity of impressing upon men the utter futility of sin. Here the solution is partly in Christ and partly in the inevitable outworking of sin itself. Sin works ruin. Sin produces futility. The experience itself brings disillusion. We simply cannot travel sin's road without arriving at sin's hopelessness and despair. The cross of Christ hastens the conclusion and deepens the impression. Every voice of experience and revelation unites to proclaim the utter vanity of sin. Sin is the choice of self. The choice of self is isolation and brings deepening isolation. Isolation is futility and discovers despair. We can describe the whole of sin in four compound words, each one of which begins with self. They are self-will, self-sufficiency, self-glory, and self-seeking. A life so motivated cannot possibly discover any lasting good. How trenchantly Jesus put it—"He that seeketh himself shall lose himself"! This dark revelation of the certain desolation and vanity of sin, deepened and intensified by the cross, is an effective force in salvation because it reveals to men the inevitable ruin of their way.

The task of winning man from his choice of self and of wooing him from his fear is already complete in the revelation of sin's ruin and of God's grace and salvation in the cross and resurrection of Jesus. The risen Jesus begets man anew unto a lively hope; it lifts him free from the dark despair of threatening death.

The cross woos him from his shrinking fear of righteousness. Its moral emphasis appeals to his quickened moral nature. Its boundlessness of grace appeals to his sense of shame and helpless need.

The winsome, pleading love and the almighty power of the risen ascended Jesus win his confidence. He yields his pride, confessing his shame and ruin. He rises out of his fears, daring to trust the awful tenderness of that righteousness disclosed on Calvary. He comes near to God. He yields himself to Christ.

It is enough. God in Christ envelops him. Christ and he are one. Christ's atonement covers his guilt. Christ's glory enriches his poverty. Christ becomes his all in all.

God Overcomes the Evil Influence of Sin

The problem of the evil influence of our false choices upon the lives of others is most serious. We can believe, however, that the answer in Christ is complete. In part we can see it. Thus we can see his omniscience and power overruling our evil and making it work actual good. Take the instance of the martyrdom of the first Christian witnesses. The mad folly of the Jewish and pagan rulers established forever the truth and sincerity of that witness. It made the transcendent Jesus and his resurrection from the dead a supremely certified fact. The guilt of those crimes is not reduced by this overruling wisdom of God, but with this guilt forgiven, the blessed result which God brought out of that sin entirely heals its memory. Forgiven men will be able to contemplate the whole memory without sorrow, in humble, grateful wonder at the grace and wisdom of God.

Then, too, it is our faith that beyond all human influence stand at last the supreme persuasions of God's Holy Spirit. Sometime, somewhere he deals with every human spirit. Sometime, somewhere he presents to everyone the all-sufficiency of God in Christ. No matter how misled by sin and heathen darkness, the Holy Spirit will bring to every soul one perfect final revelation of God's redeeming grace. We do not know how the work is done. It is a part of the mystery of God's dealings with men in the experience of death; but we are confident that he does it; and because he does it the memory of all the misleading influences of our sin upon the lives of others can be healed.

These two facts—God's overruling providences and his supreme persuasions—will be seen at once to meet very largely, if not entirely, the problem of the evil influence of man's false choices. Yes, it is true: the revelation of God is the answer to every human need. And it was as one who knew this answer to be in himself, that God dared the creation of human personality with its involved possibility of evil. The plan was all complete before sin had shown its sinister face, or even the morning stars had sung together. In that remote yesterday of history, when there was naught but law-abiding worlds, far back before man was created, God purposed the cross, and poured out his holy love, a tidal wave of redeeming grace, to overflow all the tides of sin.

CONSOLIDATING A NEW RACE

The consolidation of the new race is also complete in Christ. The self-drive of man's self-consciousness, which caused his individualism, is yielded in the experience of conviction of sin, and in the act of self-intrusting faith. The penitent sinner repents his self-will, despises his self-glory, scorns the littleness of his self-seeking, and recognizes the emptiness of his self-sufficiency. In self-abandonment he turns to Christ. He brings nothing that is his own save guilt and shame. He finds in Christ his all in all. No man who has passed through this experience can easily again live unto self. The whole illusion and fascination of self has been quenched. It died there when the sinner sat out under the moral illumination of the cross. He saw that cross as the reciprocity of his sin. Self's wild fascination lost its meaning. It collapsed in the humiliation of his experience of repentance. He seemed to himself to be hopeless, despairing. He threw his dying life upon Christ. Self ceased. Christ became his all in all. Christ became his glory, his strength. His very self-consciousness is now changed. In every realization of self, it is of a self that had been redeemed. It is a true expression of Christian experience when Paul testifies: "I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me." "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure." The forgiven sinner would not dare to face life again as self alone. Paul again speaks truly when he says, if the Christian man is to glory, he would best glory in some infirmity, for it is only when we are consciously weak and dependent and intrusted that we are strong.

Humility, trust Christward, love, and gratitude are unceasingly a part of the self-consciousness of every redeemed man who has become united to Christ by faith. This fact makes as certainly for holy unity, for organic relationships, as the old self-drive made for individualism, conflict, and disunity. In Christ we are made one, as Jesus phrased it in his great intercession: "That they all may be one; as thou, Father, art in me, and I in thee, that they also may be one in us . . . And the glory which thou gavest me I have given them; that they may be one, even as we are one."

THE DELIVERANCE OF LIFE FROM LIMITATIONS

The lifting of redeemed men out of life's present limitation is not properly a problem. It waits but for the sovereign word of the omnipotent God. The resurrection of the dead is no greater work for almighty Christ than is his waking of a sleeping child. No capable theistic thinker will ever shut God up to the laws and forces he has already willed, and which stand revealed in sense experience. He is the same God, the Father Almighty, that he was when in the beginning he said, "Let there be, . . . and it was so." "I am the resurrection and the life," said Jesus. He doubtless meant to say that resurrection power was but his willing, and that the life it would disclose would be transcendent, triumphant life like that which was made manifest in him. Only after Easter did his disciples understand this truth, or comprehend that God could clothe the human spirit with a body that would perfectly serve without limiting it. But in Christ they saw it done. They saw a body that could handle and be handled, and that yet could at the spirit's will be swept through space, appear and disappear. How idle to ask our superficial "How?" Have we not learned that matter is only force and that force is wholly mystery? "Thou fool" is often God's answer to those wise questions which reveal the ignorance and folly of men.

Christ will one day lift us free, above all the oppressing limitations of our present unfinished probationary state, and will open to us the sweep of his created universe to know and will in. We will sit upon his throne, ruling with him the stars. We will be with him localized in space, seeing him face to face, yet sharing with him, also, his space-transcending all-presentness. We will behold his glory—the everlasting love of God for God; the motive of creation; the emotion of which creation is the song.

Lost Personalities

And then, last of all, the problem of lost personalities. I do not find either in the Bible or in my own experience of freedom any encouragement toward faith in a final universalism. It does not seem to me that sin could be so real a fact as to move God to such a judgment as race-wide death and the cross of Jesus, if it did not include the possibility of endless doom. Nor does it seem to me that sinful men could possibly remain free to will their little pride and independence one moment after uncertainty is done, and the eternal God stands forth compellingly revealed. Unless we have learned to will with God before we see him, seeing him will snap our small proud wills, and sweep us, unwilling, to obedience. This, however, is the obedience of slaves that can never know the glory of sonship. Such enslaved lives can never experience the vision of the glory of God. They are shut out as blind men are from beholding the masterpieces of human painting. How vivid is Jesus' word, "outer darkness"!

Enough: it is not yet given to us to know God's final wisdom; we but state our faith. These dark lives, darkened by their own false choosings, will yet some day serve his holy purpose; though they can never know the glory that they serve. They will be lost souls; yet it will not be their guiltiness that damns them. All guilt is atoned in Christ. There is nothing wanting in the judgment uttered out there amid the darkness of Golgotha's rugged hill. Nor yet will it be that they are damned because redeeming love did not reach to them. The love of God made manifest in Christ is all-including. It reaches all. It overflows all. My brethren, how sublime is our confession—"I believe in the . . . forgiveness of sins." There is no sin that is not included. The grace of God in Christ is a shoreless sea. It engulfs man's sins as the ocean would a shell cast upon its surface. It was there. It is gone. It is engulfed. The ocean remains. So is Christ and his sufficiency for sin. Lost souls are self-destroyed. They faced infinite possibilities, and refused them. They would not. They died of thirst in the midst of rivers of water, because they would not drink. They died of self in the midst of the ocean of Christ's love, upon the bosom of which they were floated, because they would not yield themselves to him. Burdened with self, its vanity, its pride, they still seek self yet more and more. In the name of self they proudly mock the cross, and with their latest breath cry "Self" and pass, not damned for guilt, but fools.

We have reached the other end of the rainbow. We have surveyed with one swift glance the whole panorama of redemption. We are overwhelmed with the wonder of its all sufficiency. We confess with the Christian centuries: God's grace is sufficient for sin. The expression of his holiness is able to wash away its stain. His persuasive love and almighty power are able to heal its wound. God is measurelessly sufficient. When he has manifested himself there can be no remaining problem. All things are harmonized in him. "For he is our peace, who hath made both one, and hath broken down the middle wall of partition between us; having abolished in his flesh the enmity, . . . for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace."

"I believe in the . . . forgiveness of sins."

PRAYER

Oh, holy Lord Jesus Christ, here and in all thy churches that are in all the world we adore thee: because by thy holy cross thou hast redeemed the world.

"It is enough; earth's struggles soon shall cease,
And Jesus call us to heaven's perfect peace."

CHAPTER X

"THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING"

“The resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting.” Amen.

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.”—*Revelation 22. 17.*

CHAPTER X

"THE RESURRECTION OF THE BODY AND THE LIFE EVERLASTING"

ALL my life, my brethren, I have felt the solemn mystery of death. Ever since I was a child I have listened for some sure word of everlasting life. I remember when a boy in the upper grades of the grammar school with what eagerness I used to read theological books if they gave promise of casting even one faint ray of light upon the mystery of life to be. I think my favorite hymn has always been:

> "Hark, hark, my soul!
> Angelic songs are swelling."

I am far removed from those first outreachings, so wistful, so mysterious. In mid-life, I affirm with all confidence: "I believe in the . . . resurrection of the body; and life everlasting." Soberly and without exaggeration I assert that the glorified world of the triumphant is as much a part of my life and goes as much into the make-up of my daily choices as the things that are visible about me in this beautiful but fading world. I deeply believe in the resurrection of the body and in life everlasting, and wish to state somewhat of the ground of my faith and somewhat, also, of its content.

A TRUTH FOR FAITH

I think I will make a beginning by pointing out that the pathway into assurance concerning a future life is inevitably a pathway of faith. It belongs to none of the human sciences, and no man can approach it as a scientist. We approach it only as eager moral personalities. Doctor Weismann, the great biologist of Germany, declared, There is no biological explanation of death. There is no biological reason why men must die. He also gave to the world that striking phrase, "the immortality of protozoa." There are microscopic lives, wee small lives, that never die. Man at the top dies, but the protozoa down at the bottom of life are immortal. We often speak of the aged as being worn out or run down; but we speak in unintelligent figure. The body is perpetually renewed, and there is no reason why it must run down and wear out, or, if there be a reason, our science does not know it. The fact of the matter is death stands as a mystery in the midst of life. Its philosophy is not apparent. Immortality would be a more natural and simple conception than dying.

I want you first of all to see that we cannot arrive at the truth of immortality by a scientific investigation. This is the sphere of religion. It is a truth that belongs to our complete manhood, and not to our intellects alone. Certainty in the religious sphere can be attained only by those who pursue it with all the powers of their moral being. The certainties of the Christian Creed are a personal religious confidence and not a mere intellectual conclusion.

Before we try to understand any of the details of our precious Christian confidence let us face in hurried summary several of the facts which give to it strong intellectual probability. We do not claim that these facts prove immortality. They do not. What we do claim is that they make it so probable that they leave any morally sensitive soul totally without excuse for failing to make this precious hope the fundamental belief and assumption of his life.

THE SENSE OF THE INFINITE

1. I find in my soul a sense of the infinite. And I find it nowhere else but in my soul and in the souls of other men. I used to think I actually knew the infinite of time in the ages of being and actually saw the infinite of space in the immensities of the stars; but the ages of geology and the spaces of astronomy are only immense; they are not infinite. The infinities I know are not of sense experience—they are of the soul. No matter whether it be the infinite of time, or space, or life, or power, or being, it is a majesty of the soul itself rather than of things about us. It is the image of God in us, defaced but not obliterated. It is a prophetic finger pointing man on to his destiny.

THE EVIDENCE OF PURPOSE

The evidence of purpose in the universe argues for God and for a final goal that is worthy the wisdom so manifest about us. Man's aspiring toward immortality is too clearly indicated in his soul for the promise to be denied, if the fact of intelligent purpose behind creation is established.

LIFE UNFULFILLED

Life in this world is everywhere unfulfilled.

Every aspiration of the human heart fails. We long for truth, but cannot come to it. We feel sublime emotions, but cannot express them. We sense the majesty of duty, but nowhere fulfill it. We thrill with romance and dream of love, but all our love is blemished. We see life stretching out before us, glorious with joy as the purple splendor of the morning, but the promise is never fulfilled; death overtakes us; life falls still aspiring. The fact that life is thus unfulfilled argues a future life which will realize its promise.

Social Possibilities Unfulfilled

The fact of life's failure is even larger. Not only do we fail as individuals, but the race as a whole is failing. Humanity has nowhere realized its possibilities for good through social co-operation. Democracy seems to be separated from the jungle as by a great gulf; but the gulf between our modern democracies and the kingdom of God which prophets foresaw is even wider and deeper. We can vision man's social possibilities, but they seem to be forever beyond us. In the unity of society, as well as in the individual, life is as sadly unfulfilled.

MAN'S UNIVERSAL LONGING

Nevertheless this universal failure never cures us of our aspiration. All the tragedies of life cannot put out its burning light. We turn from failure and death to the hope of life yet to be. It matters not where we turn, whether it be to the religious primitive in his darkness, or to a Plato or Paul, always and everywhere we find the same exalted hope. The primitive puts food and water in the grave of his beloved. Modern man covers him with a soft, warm blanket. Perhaps the primitive's faith is not quite as crude as we have imagined. His food and water may simply express the same aspiring as our blanket. It is the inbuilt longing and hope of the race; and it is universal.

LIFE DOES VIOLENCE TO THE MORAL SENSE

Life does awful violence to the moral intuitions of the race. We have a sense of duty, judgment, justice, but the universe itself does not keep the law. There is that which we class as relatively virtuous which suffers and that which we class as relatively wrong which prospers. Conscience cannot yield its vision, nor can the facts of experience be interpreted in harmony with our moral sense. Yet if there is any moral reality in the universe, somewhere, sometime the conscience of the race must be justified. Once again our eager hearts are fixed upon the vision of eternal hope.

THE UNIQUE RELIGIOUS INCREASE IN ISRAEL

Stretching down through history is the record of Israel: her unique prophetic messengers, her sublime ethical monotheism, her increasing Messianic hope—a mighty, luminous fact. And no matter how you may feel about these things—prophecy and the supernatural —if you are to deal faithfully with history, you must consider them. You must explain the rise of Israel's religion and hope. You must deal with those stately, gaunt, flaming figures who stand out in such bold relief against the horizon of her yesterday. Century after century they proclaim their Messianic hope with a changeless passion, but with an ever-increasing grasp and detail. "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder; and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end," while the sun endureth.

This prophetic hope is a phenomenon of life, and, whatever one's philosophy, it must be dealt with. Rationalism may say it is no more than the soul's intuitive aspiring; but it is at least that, and that in a heightened form.

THE FACT OF JESUS CHRIST

Following hard upon this prophetic hope stands the mighty fact of Jesus Christ. He is unexplainable. He is incomparable. From end to end he is sublime. The record of his resurrection is the fitting consummation of the matchless glory of his life; and, if the witness to this record is not a demonstration, it is only because a historical witness cannot achieve demonstration. Christ is a supreme historical probability; and if Christ be true, then immortality is assured.

CHRISTIAN EXPERIENCE

There is the phenomenon of Christian experience—the soul's rising into an immediate religious certainty that is incapable of proof, but that needs no proof. Take that aged mother in whose coronation we mourn and yet rejoice. She was lying in her room, awaiting her deliverance from pain. She said to her son-in-law when he brought her tray: "Walter, is there any gloom downstairs? There isn't any in my room." No gloom in spite of pain and feebleness! Her Christian heart was full of a great certainty, the certainty of immortal life already begun within her feeble mortal frame.

CHRIST'S CREATIVE POWER IN HISTORY

Christian experience is certified by its transforming accomplishments across the centuries. We cannot lightly brush aside the Christian witness to Pentecost when the fruitage of an abiding Pentecost is so patent a fact upon the face of history. Christian experience has made the world over, and the work is still going on.

PAUL'S ANALOGIES

When we face the expectation of everlasting life, one of the first thoughts that come to our minds is that of the resurrection body itself. Paul presents two very beautiful and illuminating truths in this connection in his discussion addressed to the people of Corinth. He said there is an analogy of the resurrection in the growth of seed. The grain of wheat falls into the ground and disintegrates. The germ alone lives on. The rest of the seed is converted into sugar and dust. It gives itself to feed the germ. And so out of the decay of the grain arises a new body. Its development is profoundly mysterious. It is a body of glory, which appears by the will of God. And then he draws the comparison. We too are sown in corruption, but raised in incorruption; sown in weakness, but raised in power; sown a natural body, but raised a spiritual body. This is our body of glory which also appears by the will of God. The mystery is no deeper in the one case than in the other.

Paul's second argument meets the desire of our hearts to know something of the nature and description of this spiritual or glorified body. His appeal here is to the exhaustless wealth of the divine imagination. He calls to mind the variety of bodies which we see about us. God clothed life with the fins of a fish. He clothed it also with the feathers of a bird; with the hair of a beast; with the dignity of man. He has made suns and stars and moons, and given to each its peculiar beauty. He has made angels for heaven and men for the earth. Everywhere his work has been appropriate; everywhere he has clothed being with the glory that fitted it. Why, then, should we question the resource and imagination of God? He has not finished. The world as we see it is not his ultimate thought. We wait for the revelation of the new glory that shall be when this body that was sown in corruption and weakness is raised in the power of perfection and everlasting life. One feels almost as if he could catch the thrill of the apostle's own heart in his mighty concluding words: "Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord."

THE IDENTITY OF THE RESURRECTION BODY

God, then, will give to us a body as it pleases him, and the boundlessness of the divine imagination and resource is the sufficient answer to every query as to what kind of a body it will be. But there is still this question: Will the body of glory be in identity with the body of death? Will we be able to gaze upon and know each other in heaven? The question is not specifically raised in the Scriptures, and its answer involves real difficulty. In part the voice of the church has not been either clear or united.

Then again the idea of physical identity has become increasingly difficult with the advance made by science in the knowledge of our bodies. First, we learned that the substance of our bodies changed from year to year. More recently we have learned that that substance itself is not a stable quantity but a complex of moving forces. In just what sense, then, can we affirm the identity of the body of death and the glorified body of the resurrection?

We are manifestly dealing with a different problem here from that involved in the record of the resurrection of Jesus. In his case the complex of fluent forces that constituted his earthly body was transformed in the sepulcher into the body of his resurrection. It involves no great mystery. The power to change the atoms of hydrogen into their electrical constituents furnishes us with a suggestive analogy. The body of earth disappeared. It was converted into the body of glory. In the case of Jesus there were two important considerations. 1. The body of death had completely to disappear in the appearing of the body of glory so that there would be no confusing of the evidences of the resurrection. 2. The body of the resurrection had to be in expressive identity with the body of death. The risen Jesus must look the same, speak the same, move the same as the earthly Jesus. Every individual peculiarity must come through to expression in the new body. In the case of humanity as a whole the second of these two considerations only seems to be important.

I had an experience once which it seems to me wonderfully illuminates this whole question. I was in a home, and a physician came in who had not seen me since I was a boy of eight—thirty-eight years previously. They introduced me to him, and he said: "Why, yes, I would have known you if I had met you on the street. Your forehead is just the same, and there is the same look out of your eyes that was there when you were a boy and lived next door to me, a young physician, down on Mickel Street—yes, I would have known you, I think, anywhere." Wherein, now, was the identity between the boy of eight and the man of forty-six? Not a single atom of my body is the same as it was when he saw me last thirty-eight years before. Then I was under four feet tall; now I am over six. Then I weighed sixty or seventy pounds; now I weigh two hundred. But he said: "I would have known you. Your forehead is just the same, and there is the same look out of your eyes." The answer is evident. The identity is in personality and in its effective expression. The atoms do not matter. He did not identify them. It was the shape of my forehead and the look out of my eyes—the personal peculiarities through which my individual soul came into expression. Here is the essential value in the identity of the body: identity in the total expressive powers of our physical being. Our faces and forms, the quality of our voices, the fashion of our movements—in a word, every expressive power of life, all must be preserved and come through in the body of the resurrection.

Now, it may be when God raises us to immortal life, he will take the very dust that was buried in the earth and transform it into a body of glory, as he did with the dust that was buried in Joseph's sepulcher just outside the city of Jerusalem. It may be that there is in our bodies some secret physical value, like the germ in the grain of wheat—I do not know; but these possibilities are not the important thing. The important thing is that our bodies of the resurrection shall express us in every smallest individual peculiarity: so that, when we come to stand out there beyond death, we will be in expressive identity with all that life was before we passed over.

A BODY THAT SERVES WITHOUT LIMITING THE SOUL

Yes, this body of the resurrection will express us, but it will not limit us. It will leave our spirits free to will and move and know clear round the universe of God, as Jesus' body did. Why not? Why must my body remain forever a brake upon my soul? There is no reason. I have for many years been interested in an adequate expression of the resurrection in art. One day I saw Tissot's picture. He presents Jesus bursting from his sepulcher into midair. Someone has said the angel rolled away the stone, not to allow the risen Christ to leave the tomb, but to show to the sorrowing hearts of men that the sepulcher was empty. It is well said; and it is so I conceive the resurrection. I believe we are to burst forth into everlasting life with bodies that will perfectly express, without limitation, our spirits; with bodies that we can will clear round the utmost universe of God.

MY FAITH

And now I would speak by way of

suggestion only: for, beyond these things, which seem certain, there is much of deep mystery about the wondrous life toward which we move. But let me express my feeling. I believe that the very least detail of human history is so precious to our Father in heaven that none of it will be lost. I believe that the place where we loved, and parted, and wept, will be the place from which our immortal life will start in its resurrection glory. Where are we between now and then—we and those loved ones whom we have lost a while? I answer that for my faith we are with Christ, in the midst of vaster knowledge, vaster fellowship, vaster experience than we have ever known on earth. I do not believe that life for God's saints ever takes a backward step. There are those indeed who sing, "Make me a child again, just for to-night," but I could not possibly sing it. Life in Christ is forever larger. Maturity is larger than youth; and age has its own wistful wonder.

"Grow old along with me,
The best is yet to be,
The last of life for which the first was made."

Dare I try to imagine the mystery of that life still unrevealed? Can I paint for you a picture of our fellowships as triumphant souls in the midst of the glory of God, where there is no spot of sin, or wrinkle of age, or blemish of defeat, but where life is perfect even as its Maker's? How sweet the expectation which sings:

"What knitting severed friendships up
Where partings are no more!"

Yes, the ties that were broken at the grave will be renewed over there. We shall see again:

". . . those angel faces smile,
Which I have loved long since, and lost awhile!"

And then there will be new contacts, innumerable new friendships: for we will love and be loved by all redeemed men. How wonderful to sit down with Abraham, perhaps by the side of a crystal stream, and to hear him talk of his experience on Mount Moriah, when God brought the lamb as a substitute in sacrifice for his son Isaac, and he knew for the first time that God was not only just but also good! How wonderful, too, to see the old prophet Elijah, and to hear him tell of the exaltation of that mighty experience on

Mount Carmel when he prayed at the hour of the evening sacrifice, and out of the brazen skies came down the tongue of fire that reached from the throne of God to Carmel's altar! Or to listen to John as he talks of the things he felt and saw that night in Gethsemane; and of the dark yet wonderful afternoon beneath the cross on Golgotha's hill. Or to hear Mary Magdalene tell of that first divine Easter morning before it was yet light in the garden of Joseph of Arimathea, when the risen Jesus called her by name, and she held him by his feet. Oh, my friends, we are to commune with many noble souls over there, in that life where partings are no more!

And then, beyond all this sublimity is the face to face communion with our Lord himself; richer by far than our present experience of the inward intimacy of his presence. We will be with him where he is, and he will lead us into a deeper and yet deeper apprehension of that utmost sublimity of the universe—the eternal love of God, of which all creation is the poem and song.

Do you say to me, "Where will it all be?" I can speak only my own faith, but it is with all positiveness. I believe it will be everywhere. It is my firm conviction that at last when my soul has been equipped with its body of glory it will be my privilege to explore the wisdom of God clear round the circle of the boundless stars.

I believe in God the Father; yes, and in Jesus Christ, his only Son; who came to us out of the eternals, out of the glory of God, and revealed through flesh and blood like our flesh and blood the wonder of his infinite love. I believe that he died for my sins. I believe that he rose again from the dead. I believe that he ascended into heaven; that he is enthroned in the majesty of the infinite; that from heaven, whither he went, he is coming again to give immortal life to every believing heart.

I believe in the blessed Holy Spirit, illuminator of our darkness.

I believe in the Holy Catholic Church which is the community of saints; the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting.

And I heard, as it were, the voice of an angel singing, and the words of the song are the words of the Revelation, "And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."

CHAPTER XI

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANS

“The riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.”—*Colossians 1. 27.*

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.”—*1 Corinthians 15. 22.*

“For as by one man’s disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous. Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: that as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might grace reign through righteousness unto eternal life by Jesus Christ our Lord.”—*Romans 5. 19ff.*

CHAPTER XI

APOSTOLIC CHRISTIANS

WE have just surveyed the majesty of the historic Christian Creed. It spans the centuries from the eternity of God's solitude before creation to the eternity of God, wholly uttered in the sublimity of his completed universe, the kingdom of his purpose. As we have gazed upon these majesties, the conviction has been increasingly borne in upon our minds that the Christian faith is final, is everlasting. Epochs belong to other truths and movements, but to Christianity belong the ages.

The period of history in which we are living will doubtless be recorded as the epoch of the physical sciences. The face of our civilization is dotted everywhere with its marvels. Science has multiplied manufacture, facilitated travel, improved and enriched homes. It cures disease, protects health, lightens life. Every important event in the sphere of physical life has felt the influence of scientific discovery and invention. Science stands by us when we are born, to assist our entry into life. It ministers to us physically every day of our earthly pilgrimage. It stands by us again when we go out, to watch our exit.

But these two events and this sphere bound its ministry. Science has not been able to throw any light upon man's beginning. It knows nothing about the fact or nature of his destiny. It has no contact with his soul. It can neither apprehend nor explain his tremendous moral life. It has no understanding either of his freedom or his worship. Science is limited to the physical world, the world of sense, and of the perishing present. If we are to recognize in life anything beyond these values, anything such as personality, righteousness, immortality, destiny, we must find it in a sphere that utterly transcends our science. These things belong to faith. These things at their best are Christianity.

CHRONOLOGY AND CHRIST

It is not an accident of history, but, rather, an inevitable necessity that has made chronology Christian. We do not date the events of history from the invention of printing, the discovery of the steam engine, the discovery of electricity, or from any other scientific discovery or invention. These all quickly drop into the background, and fall out of our thought like the other commonplaces of life. You were not born in the tenth year of the electric light, or the fifth year of the automobile, or the first year of the radio. You were born in the eighteen-hundredth, the nineteen-hundredth odd year of Christ.

He alone abides across the centuries, the one fact that is ageless, the pole star of all time yet to be. You may not believe in Christ. You may be an atheist, denying even the existence of God. No matter; in its every act your life must pay tribute to Christ. Your birth is dated from his own. Every transaction of your years will stand formally in relation to his coming. And when you pass beyond, the plate that is buried with your mortal remains will record that you went out so many years after he became incarnate.

This circumstance is not an accident. It is inevitable. Christ is so sublime men cannot escape him. He dominates the increasing centuries. His church is the greatest of earth's empires. Its Creed—his history—is the most priceless of human possessions.

The wealth of the nations is in glittering gold, their glories are in imperishable granite. Christ's kingdom is invisible and its assets spiritual. Nevertheless, it stands supreme. The cross is above every banner of earth. The wisdom of Christ is wiser than men. The strength of Christ is stronger than men. He, though intangible, abides like the eternal hills, while the riches of earthly empires and the achievements of men quickly pass like the fleeting clouds of a summer sky.

Facing this mighty fact and movement which fills the centuries, we ask ourselves, What is its essential vitality? What makes men a part of it? What makes men Christians? And who are Christians to-day? Some men will reply that the central vitality of Christianity is the ethical ideals of Jesus. Others will say it is the contagion of his spirit, the inspiration of his example; but we cannot be content so to narrow down the Christian movement. Christianity is these things, but it is more than these things. Christianity is the one supreme, all-including divine purpose that in Christ is resolving all the discords of man's history, consolidating all his anarchy of separateness into unity, and consummating all his incompleteness into perfection. Christianity is the last sublime process in God's creative toil, and he has invited man to share this part of his labor with him. He has come personally into the stream of our history to stand there beside us, and share our life with us. He has revealed himself to us, perfected the expression of his ideal for us, taken our death into his own life, triumphed over our grave, and now leads our way out into eternal destiny.

This whole tremendous fact of Jesus Christ, God's eternal Son, come into the stream of human history, living the ideal, revealing God, dying for sin, rising, triumphing, resolving the discord of sin, uniting men to himself, transforming them, transforming and unifying society, and lifting the completed whole into the vision of the glory of God—this all is the central vitality of Christianity.

THE SEVEN GREAT VALUES

We can analyze in this whole truth seven great values:

1. Christianity is the fact of Christ, God come personally into the stream of human history; resolving its discords, and pointing man's way out into the glory of his everlasting destiny.

2. Christianity is the appeal the total fact

of Christ makes to man's total being, his mind, his heart, his conscience, and his will.

3. Christianity is man's responding in his act of self-committing faith to the appeal of Christ.

4. Christianity is the experience of unity with God and Christ wrought by the Holy Spirit in the inner consciousness of the believer.

5. Christianity is a way of living that puts into expression the rich motive of love which thrills through the believer's whole experience of unity with Christ.

6. Christianity is an increasing expression in man's social relationships of human solidarity, the perfect unity of God's own life.

7. Christianity is the final consummation; the redeemed multitude; the complete unification of men; the perfect vision of God.

Christianity Is God in the Stream of Human History

Christianity is God come personally into the stream of human history, resolving its discord and pointing man's way out into his destiny.

Men are apt to live in the present. Some few live in the future as well, but men do not feel powerfully the reality of the past. God, on the contrary, lives in all eternity. The past as well as the present and future are real and precious to him. In redeeming men, God must deal not only with man's future, but with his past, with all his past, with all the past of all men.

Think of this concretely. Attila the Hun, with his torch and sword, his ravished women and burning cities, his pyramid of ten thousand skulls, is only a curious record; but to God, Attila and his history are vivid abiding realities. It is the same with Nero and Judas and Caiaphas. To us they are only names, but to God they are personalities and their history a vivid reality. It is the same with our sins: adulteries, untruths, overreachings, jealousies, wrongs we have done, and those we have only wished or thought. We forget them. They are only dim memories in our past. But for God they are vivid abiding realities. They are imperishable; and they must all be resolved and unified in his final purpose.

History is not just a vanished past, lost and unreal. It is an abiding value, which in its totality must be related to God's final purpose. And history is dark with hatred and treachery, with strife and blood. It is a wild discord that blares like a false note in a symphony. This is the work of Christ. This is the meaning of the incarnation. God has come into the stream of history to resolve its discord and to lead man's way out into glory.

The very fact that Jesus is in human history glorifies history. It is like a painting I saw once of Christ and war. The foreground was full of strife and blood and confusion; and then you saw Christ standing in the midst with arms outreached, saying, "Love one another." The confusion melted away; war became only the background against which he stood out, glorious in his love and peace.

It is so I think he fills and transfigures human history. His perfect goodness is a sublimity of beauty that enriches all its barren years. The whole of man's achievements and failures together fade into the background and Christ stands alone, supreme, sufficient. His cross thunders with a deeper moral note than all the human death that fills the years. When God in flesh died there amid shrouded skies and trembling earth, it uttered divine judgment upon sin measurelessly. And when on Easter morning Jesus triumphed over death, instantly it was daybreak and the dawning of the eternal morning. In the book of the Revelation the Christian ages are pictured as this sublime victorious figure riding down the centuries. His name is Faithful and True; his title is King of Kings, and Lord of Lords; his eyes are as a flame of fire. His vesture is dipped in blood. The sword of his almighty Word issues from his mouth, and in his train ride increasing multitudes, robed in white. This is the Christian movement. This is Christianity, and those who follow in his train are Christians. They are men who have committed themselves to him; who have replaced their passion of self-will with the passion of his obedience. They are men who have replaced their petty prides with the glory of his love and the wonder of his purpose. They are men who rejoice rather in their infirmities, knowing that when they are consciously weak then they are strong: because then, trusting him, his power abides upon them.

Such commitments to Christ have consequences both inward and outward, both individual and social. Inwardly they are lives lifted up into conscious unity with Christ. Outwardly they are lives motivated anew. Individually they are sinful men made saints.

Socially they are the selfishness and tyranny of pagan institutions transformed into the enlarging humanity and democracy of the kingdom of God. Paul the Pharisee becomes Paul the apostle and martyr. Jerry McCauley, the drunkard and river thief, becomes the apostle of the Bowery, the best-loved name in the New York City of a generation ago. The tyranny of ancient empires becomes the democracy of Christian states. The slavery of ancient industry becomes the increasing altruism of Christianity in business.

And still Christ moves on and on, conquering and to conquer. The abolition of the traffic in intoxicants in our day will stand to a future generation alongside of the great emancipation of the sixties. The Kellogg Peace Treaty and the MacDonald mission will mark an epoch in the development of international peace like the monk Telemachus leaping into the arena, and separating the gladiators.

It is sublime. And yet its greatest area is beyond our ken, over in the everlastings. There are millions on earth marching with Christ to-day. They are as no one compared to the millions gone before. We think too seldom of them. We dream too little of the beatific vision in which they now rejoice. They are with Him where he is. They are gazing on his glory. They are beholding the wonder of the love of God for God—the motive which is behind all creation, and of which all creation is the poem and song. Nevertheless, their life is not yet made full. They wait for us.

Saints, apostles, prophets, martyrs,
  Mighty victors gone before;
Brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers
  Over on the ageless shore.

They are walking in his presence,
  They are searching out his plan.
They are waiting for its fullness,
  Which he willed ere worlds began.

Not without us can they find it;
  Nor without us fully see;
For God's will is all-including,
  And his purpose unity.

They must wait till earth is ended
  And its last probation done;
They must wait till saint and sinner
  Find their portion at the throne.

Then, his purpose all enfolding,
  Be it doom or be it bliss,
Every life shall show his glory
  Who in Christ makes all things his.

Then—oh wonder of the vision!—
Man, a unity sublime,
Shall behold the Triune Splendor
Sweeping down the aisles of time.

And now comes the searching question: Am I a Christian? Am I committed to its Christ? Am I united to him in my very innermost consciousness? Am I marching in his train?

I remember that last time I marched. It was on Armistice Day, 1918. The bells rang; the whistles blew; and before it was light the streets were full of people marching and singing for the joy of peace. And all day long we marched and sang and shouted. My brethren, that is what it is to be a Christian. That is the spirit and passion of our marching with Christ. We are filled with Christ. We are exultant in Christ. We are mastered by Christ. We may be weary, but we wipe away the sweat and march on rejoicing. We may be wounded, but we wipe away the blood and march on, still triumphant. The sun is sinking in the west. The night is falling; but ever happy, ever singing, we march on. Men call it death; but we see Him, and march out victorious into the dark, assured that we will find the unfading light, the eternal morning.

My brethren, this is Christianity; and thus to be motivated and united into Christ is to be a Christian.

EPILOGUE

"Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints."

"Holding fast the faithful word as he hath been taught, that he may be able by sound doctrine both to exhort and to convince the gainsayers."

Sitting at the end of these meditations I want to add briefly in broad outline a statement of my personal faith. It is fuller than the Apostles' Creed as a man's personal faith must be; but it is completely loyal to it and to the biblical truths that lie behind it. For me these beliefs are the very breath of life. They are the atmosphere in which a man can live and aspire. Holding these he can dare, sacrifice, and march on even to death with the tread of a conqueror, assured that life will at last disclose all the sublimities for which he has longed and waited.

The Christian creed is thus for me not a limiting formula, but instead a widened horizon which makes room for my soul to live and move about. I must believe: the facts of sense experience are too small. In Christ and only by faith can I find an outer world vast enough, majestic enough to satisfy the boundlessness of my inner aspirings; and so because Christ is true by history and ought to be true by my soul: therefore I believe:

I. TRINITY

I believe that God, the Creator of the universe, is an organic unity, a Triunity, three in Personality, one in Being, and holiness.

II. UNIVERSE

I believe that the unity of the universe is the symbol of his own; that it is in fact the poem of his life, the song of his love.

III. MAN

I believe God created man in his own image, the noblest line in his poem.

IV. SIN

I believe that man sinned; that the image of God in us is defaced; but that it is nevertheless still ours, and that this fact is big with promise.

V. ASPIRATION AND REVELATION

I believe that this defaced image of God in us causes in our souls a sublime discontent which nothing of sense experience can satisfy; that the Holy Spirit of God everywhere and always responds to our aspirings in supernatural self-disclosure; but that in Scripture and for the whole race he has made a uniquely full and significant redemptive self-disclosure.

VI. INCARNATION

I believe that God brought this unique revelation of himself in Scripture to completion in the incarnation of his Second Person, the Eternal Son, who took human nature and flesh in the womb of Mary, the virgin.

VII. ATONEMENT

I believe that this divine-human Being made manifest the glory of God among men, both his ethical glory and his omnipotence; that in his own life he bore the judgment of divine holiness upon sin, taking the sinner's death as his own; that he triumphed over our death, rising from the dead and ascending into heaven, to be the organic center of redeemed humanity, whose progress he leads both on earth and in heaven out into the glory of God.

VIII

I believe that Jesus' life and resurrection are the revelation of all that man's individual life is yet to be; and that in human society, through the influence of his church, there is being made manifest increasingly a prophecy of the fullness of man's social destiny.

IX

I believe that the ages will be consummated in a magnificent objectification, an expression in history of love's triumph and of sin's doom; that at this time Christ will return to earth in visible glory, the dead will be raised, sin will be judged, and life will sweep out into the completeness of the eternal purpose of God.

X

I believe that this faith is the very summit of truth, the goal of all science, the norm of all philosophy; and that to believe it is life's highest privilege, and its noblest intellectual and moral attainment.

Glory Be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As It Was in the Beginning, Is Now, and Ever Shall Be, World Without End. Amen.

Pnwb

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